Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/cornhillmagazine0021vari

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

VOL. XXI.

JANUARY TO JUNE, 1870.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15, WATERLOO PLACE.

1870.

[*The right of Publishing Translations of Articles in this Magazine is reserved.*]

CONTENTS OF VOLUME XXI.

PUT YOURSELF IN HIS PLACE.

		PAGE
Chapter	XXVIII.	1
„	XXIX.	5
„	XXX.	129
„	XXXI.	132
„	XXXII.	140
„	XXXIII.	257
„	XXXIV.	268
„	XXXV.	268
„	XXXVI.	276
„	XXXVII.	279
„	XXXVIII.	385
„	XXXIX.	401
„	XL.	513
„	XLI.	529
„	XLII.	641
„	XLIII.	646
„	XLIV.	660

AGAINST TIME.

Chapter	X.	The Calumet goes round among the Childersleighs	105
„	XI.	Miss Winter loses a Home and finds a Friend	110
„	XII.	The General Meeting	118
„	XIII.	Mr. Childersleigh at Home	233
„	XIV.	The Waif washed to Land	241
„	XV.	Ulysses stops his Ears to the Sirens	249
„	XVI.	Barrington fallen on his Feet	362
„	XVII.	Mr. Hemprigge in Society	366
„	XVIII.	Mr. Hooker "en Retraite"	375
„	XIX.	Killoden	380
„	XX.	The Picnic on Ben-y-Gair	483
„	XXI.	Cast away in the Clouds	493
„	XXII.	Mr. Hemprigge breaks his Rule and makes a Confidence	505
„	XXIII.	The Apples of Discord	611

AGAINST TIME—*continued.*

PAGE

Chapter XXIV. The Ottoman Loan 614
„ XXV. Friends in Council 627
„ XXVI. Love among the Thorns 633
„ XXVII. Mr. Hemprigge sacrifices his Career to his Conscience 731
„ XXVIII. And suffers accordingly 744
„ XXIX. Lucy makes a Scene, and Maude a Discovery 752

SHAMROCKIANA.

Chapter II. The Pre-Unionists 48
„ III. A Page of Biography supplied 56
„ IV. The "Last Flicker of Nationality" 167
„ V. The Debate on the Union 172
„ VI. The Decline of Irishmen 299
„ VII. The Last of the Great Ones 303
„ VIII. The O'Connell Era 307
„ IX. O'Connell's Contemporaries 314

"After Many Days." By Philip Bourke Marston 343
Antipathies, National 154
At Rome. By H. C. Merivale 460
Autumn, In Late. By Charles Denys Conway 730

Barbarossa Legend, The. By Karl Blind 424
Bishop, Our New. Àpropos of the "Œcumenical" 63
Bruyère, La 346

Catalonia, The Lions of—Monserrat 663
Chinese (A) Commissioner's Foreign Tour 578
Christmas in the Days of Old, Glimpses of 28
Church of England (The) and Puritanism. By Matthew Arnold 180
Clever Forgery (A) 706
Conscription, Letters about the.—The February Post-Bag 204

February Post-Bag.—Letters about the Conscription 204
Fog-Signals 477
Fools, The Uses of 465
Forgery, A Clever 706

Gerald Griffin: The Stream that Hurries by 61
Glimpses of Christmas in the Days of Old 28
Gong, Sounding the 418

Hôtel Rambouillet, A Pupil of the 533

PAGE

Iron Mask, The Man in the 333

King Laurin's Rose-Garden 717
King of Sweden's Poems 91

La Bruyère 346
Legend, The Barbarossa. By Karl Blind 424

Marathon and its Brigands 699
Mediæval Paris, The Theatre in 595
Monserrat—The Lions of Catalonia 663
Monte Generoso 605

National Antipathies 154

Our New Bishop. Àpropos of the "Œcumenical" 63
Our Rulers—Public Opinion 288

Paris, The Theatre in Mediæval 595
Plebiscitum (A) in the Duchy of Gerolstein—Yes or No? 677
Post-Bag, The February.—Letters about the Conscription 204
Prince Moleskine's Conspiracy.—A Russian Socialist Bubble 544
Public Opinion—Our Rulers 288
Pupil (A) of the Hôtel Rambouillet 533
Puritanism and the Church of England. By Matthew Arnold 180

Rome, At. By H. C. Merivale 460
Rose-Garden, King Laurin's 717
Russian Socialist Bubble (A).—Prince Moleskine's Conspiracy 544

Sharpe, Charles Kirkpatrick 319
Social Slavery 566
Sounding the Gong 418
Stream (The) that Hurries by. By Gerald Griffin 61
Sweden, Poems of the King of 91

Theatre (The) in Mediæval Paris 595
Two Ladies—Two Hours 435

Uses of Fools, The 465

Yes or No?—A Plebiscitum in the Duchy of Gerolstein 677

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

TO FACE PAGE

"This," said he, "is the present system" 1

"Oh, how very kind you are, Miss Childersleigh" 105

The Arrow went up at an Angle of Forty-five 129

"Oh! it's you, is it, Hemprigge?" 233

A Sigh of Horror was uttered in the Verandah 257

He flung himself back on an Ottoman, the Centre of a Group of Beauty 362

Raby found Grace Carden with her Head buried on her Toilet-table 385

Yes, this time there could be no mistake—the faint distant Bark of a Dog! 483

Two Ladies glided into the Room 513

Lucy found herself brought face to face with a Proposal 611

She had a sort of Protestant Nun's Dress on 641

Maude's Fingers paused on the Keys for a Second 731

"This," said he, "is the present system."

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1870.

Put Yourself in His Place.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"DOCTOR," said Mr. Carden, "you are an old friend, and a discreet man; I will confide the truth to you."

"You may save yourself the trouble. I have watched the whole progress of this amour up to the moment when you gave them the advantage of your paternal wisdom, and made them both miserable."

"It is very unreasonable of them, to be miserable."

"Oh, lovers parted could never yet make themselves happy with reason."

"But why do you say parted? All I said was 'no engagement till you can make a settlement: and don't compromise her in the meanwhile.' I did not mean to interdict occasional visits."

"Then why not say so? That is so like people. You made your unfavourable stipulation plain enough; but the little bit of comfort, you left that in doubt. This comes of not putting yourself in his place. I have had a talk with him about it, and he thinks he is not to show his face here till he is rich enough to purchase your daughter of you."

"But I tell you he has misunderstood me."

"Then write to him and say so."

"No, no; you take an opportunity to let him know he has really rather overrated my severity, and that I trust to his honour, and do not object to a visit—say once a week."

"It is a commission I will undertake with pleasure."

"And do you really think that will do her bodily health any good?"

Before Doctor Amboyne could reply, the piano was suddenly touched in the next room, and a sweet voice began to sing a cheerful melody. "Hush!" said Doctor Amboyne. "Surely I know that tune. Yes, I have heard *the other* whistle it."

"She has not sung for ever so long," remarked Mr. Carden.

"And I think I can tell you why she is singing now: look at this picture of Hope; I just told her I had a male patient afflicted with her complaint, and the quick-witted creature asked me directly if I thought this picture would do him any good. I said yes, and I'd take it to him."

"Come, Doctor, that couldn't make her *sing*."

"Why not? Heart can speak to heart, even by a flower or a picture. The separation was complete; sending this symbol has broken it a little, and so she is singing. This is a lesson for us ruder and less subtle spirits. Now mind, thwarted love seldom kills a busy man; but it often kills an idle woman, and your daughter is an idle woman. He is an iron pot, she is a china vase. Please don't hit them too hard with the hammer of paternal wisdom, or you will dent my iron pot, and break your China vase to atoms."

Having administered this warning, Doctor Amboyne went straight from Woodbine Villa to Little's factory; but Little was still in London; he had gone there to take out patents. Bayne promised to send the Doctor a line immediately on his return. Nevertheless, a fortnight elapsed, and then Doctor Amboyne received a short mysterious line to tell him Mr. Little had come home, and would be all the better of a visit. On receipt of this the Doctor went at once to the works, and found young Little lying on his carpenter's bench in a sort of gloomy apathy. "Hallo!" said the Doctor, in his cheerful way, "why what's the matter now?"

"I'm fairly crushed," groaned the inventor.

"And what has crushed you?"

"The roundabout swindle."

"There, now, he invents words as well as things. Come, tell me all about the roundabout swindle."

"No, no; I haven't the heart left to go through it all again, even in words. One would think an inventor was the enemy of the human race. Yes, I will tell you; the sight of you has revived me a bit; it always does. Well, then, you know I am driven to invention now; it is my only chance: and, ever since Mr. Carden spoke to me, I have given my whole soul to the best way of saw-grinding by machinery. The circular saws beat me, for a while, but I mastered them: see, there's the model. I'm going to

burn it this very afternoon. Well, a month ago, I took the other model —the long-saw grinder—up to London, to patent the invention, as you advised me. I thought I'd just have to exhibit the model, and lodge the description in some Government office, and pay a fee, of course, to some swell, and so be quit of it. Lord bless you—first I had to lay the specification before the Court of Chancery, and write a petition to the Queen, and pay, and, what is worse, wait. When I had paid, and waited, I got my petition signed, not by the Queen, but by some Go-between, and then I must take it to the Attorney-General. He made me pay—and wait. When I had waited ever so long, I was sent back to where I had come from—the Home Office. But even then I could not get to the Queen. Another of her Go-betweens nailed me, and made me pay, and wait: these locusts steal your time as well as your money. At last, a copy of a copy of a copy of my patent got to the Queen, and she signed it like a lady at once, and I got it back. Then I thought I was all right. Not a bit of it: the Queen's signature wasn't good till another of her Go-betweens had signed it. I think it was the Home Secretary this time. This Go-between bled me again, and sent me, with my hard-earned signatures, to the Patent Office. There they drafted, and copied, and docketed, and robbed me of more time and money. And, when all was done, I had to take the document back to one of the old Go-betweens that I hoped I had worn out, the Attorney-General. He signed, and bled me out of some more money. From him to the other Go-betweens at Whitehall. From them to the Stamp Office, if I remember right, and, oh Lord, didn't I fall among leeches there? They drafted, they copied, they engrossed, they juggled me out of time and money without end. The first leech was called the Lord Keeper of the Seal; the second leech was called the Lord Chancellor; it was some Go-between that acted in his name: the third leech was the Clerk of the Patents. They demanded more copies, and then employed more Go-betweens to charge ten times the value of a copy, and nailed the balance, no doubt. 'Stand and deliver thirty pounds for this stamp.' 'Stand and deliver to me that call myself the Chancellor's purse-bearer—and there's no such creature—two guineas.' 'Stand and deliver seven, thirteen, to the clerk of the Hanaper'—and there's no such thing as a Hanaper. 'Stand and deliver three, five,' to a Go-between that calls himself the Lord Chancellor again, and isn't. 'Stand and deliver six, nought, to a Go-between that acts for the deputy, that ought to put a bit of sealing-wax on the patent, but hasn't the brains to do it himself, so you must pay *me* a fancy price for doing it, and then I won't do it; it will be done by a clerk at twenty-five shillings a week.' And, all this time, mind you, no disposition to soften all this official peculation by civility; no misgiving that the next wave of civilization may sweep all these Go-betweens and leeches out of the path of progress; no, the deputy-vice-Go-betweens all scowled, as well as swindled: they broke my heart so, often I sat down in their ante-chambers, and the scalding tears ran down my cheeks, at being pillaged of my time, as well as my money, and treated

like a criminal—for what? For being, in my small way, a national benefactor."

"Ay," said the Doctor, "you had committed the crime of Brains; and the worse crime of declining to be starved in return for them. I don't rebel against the fees so much: their only fault is that they are too heavy, since the monopoly they profess to secure is short-lived, and yet not very secure; the Lord Chancellor, as a judge, has often to upset the patent which he has sold in another character. But that system of go-betweens, and deputy-go-betweens, and deputy-lieutenant-go-betweens, and of nobody doing his own business in matters of State, it really is a national curse, and a great blot upon the national intellect. It is a disease; so let us name it. We doctors are great at naming diseases; greater than at curing them.

Let us call it VICARIA,
This English malaria.

Of this Vicaria, the loss of time and money you have suffered is only one of the fruits, I think."

"All I know is, they made my life hell for more than a month; and if I have ever the misfortune to invent anything more, I'll keep it to myself. I'll hide it, like any other crime. But no; I never will invent another thing: never, never."

"Stuff! Methinks I hear a duck abjure natation. You can't help inventing."

"I will help it. What, do you think I'll be such an ass as to have Brains in a country where Brains are a crime? Doctor, I'm in despair."

"Then it is time to cast your eyes over this little picture."

The inventor turned the little picture listlessly about. "It is a woman, with an anchor. It's a figure of Hope."

"Beautifully painted, is it not?"

"The tints are well laid on: but, if you'll excuse me, it is rather flat." He laid the picture down, and turned away from it. "Ah, Hope, my lass, you've come to the wrong shop."

"Not she. She was painted expressly for you, and by a very beautiful girl."

"Oh, Doctor, not by——"

"Yes; she sends it you."

"Ah!" And he caught Hope up, and began to devour her with kisses, and his eyes sparkled finely.

"I have some good news, too, for you. Mr. Carden tells me he never intended to separate you entirely from his daughter. If you can be moderate, discreet, old before your time, etc., and come only about once a week, and not compromise her publicly, you will be as welcome as ever."

"That *is* good news, indeed. I'll go there this very day; and I'll patent the circular saw."

"There's a non-sequitur for you!"

"Nothing of the kind, sir. Why, even the Queen's Go-betweens will

never daunt me, now I can go and drink love and courage direct from *her* eyes ; nothing can chill nor discourage me now. I'll light my forge again, and go to work, and make a few sets of carving-tools, and that will pay the Go-betweens for patenting my circular-saw grinder. But first I'll put on my coat and go to heaven."

"Had you not better postpone that till the end of your brilliant career as an inventor and a lover?"

"No ; I thirst for heaven, and I'll drink it." So he made his toilette, thanked and blessed the good Doctor, and off to Woodbine Villa.

Grace Carden saw him coming, and opened the door to him herself, red as scarlet, and her eyes swimming. She scarcely made an effort to contain herself this time, and when she got him into the drawing-room all to herself, she cried, for joy and tenderness, on his shoulder ; and it cost him a gulp or two, I can tell you : and they sat hand in hand, and were never tired of gazing at each other : and the hours flew by unheeded. All their trouble was as though it had never been. Love brightened the present, the future, and even the past. He did not tell Grace one word of what he had suffered from Vicaria—I thank thee, Doctor, for teaching me that word—it had lost all interest to him. Love and happiness had annihilated its true character—like the afternoon sun gilding a far-off pigsty.

He did mention the subject, however, but it was in these terms: "And, dearest, I'm hard at work inventing, and I patent all my inventions ; so I hope to satisfy your father before two years."

And Grace said, "Yes ; but don't overwork your poor brain, and worry yourself. I am yours in heart, and that is something, I hope. I know it is to me ; I wouldn't change with any wife in Christendom."

CHAPTER XXIX.

At the end of two months the situation of affairs was as follows :—

Grace Carden received a visit every week from Henry, and met him now and then at other houses : she recovered her health and spirits, and, being of a patient sex, was quite contented, and even happy. Frederick Coventry visited her often, and she received his visits quite graciously, now, that the man she loved was no longer driven from her. She even pitied him, and was kind to him, and had misgivings that she had used him ill. This feeling he fostered, by a tender, dejected, and inoffensive manner. Boiling with rage inside, this consummate actor had the art to feign resignation ; whereas, in reality, he was secretly watching for an opportunity to injure his rival. But no such opportunity came.

Little, in humble imitation of his sovereign, had employed a Go-between to employ a Go-between, to deal with the state Go-betweens and deputy Go-betweens, that hampered the purchase—the word "grant" is out of place, bleeding is no boon,—of a patent from the crown, and by

this means, he had done, in sixty days, what a true inventor will do in twenty-four hours, whenever the various metallic ages shall be succeeded by the age of reason; he had secured his two saw-grinding inventions, by Patent, in Great Britain, the Canadas, and the United States of America. He had another invention perfected: it was for forging axes and hatchets by machinery: but this he did not patent: he hoped to find his remuneration in the prior use of it for a few months. Mere priority is sometimes a great advantage in this class of invention, and there are no fees to pay for it, nor deputy-lieutenant-vice-Go-betweens' antechambers for genius to cool its heels and heart in.

But one thing soon became evident. He could not work his inventions without a much larger capital.

Dr. Amboyne and he put their heads together over this difficulty, and the Doctor advised him in a more erudite style than usual.

"True invention," said he, "whether literary or mechanical, is the highest and hardest effort of the mind. It is an operation so absorbing, that it often weakens those pettier talents, which make what we call the clever man. Therefore the inventor should ally himself with some person of talent and energy, but no invention. Thus supported, he can have his fits of abstraction, his headaches, his heart-aches, his exultations, his depressions, and no harm done; his dogged associate will plough steadily on all the time. So, after all, your requiring capital is no great misfortune; you must look out for a working capitalist. No sleeping partner will serve your turn; what you want is a good, rich, vulgar, energetic man, the pachydermatouser the better."

Henry acted on this advice, and went to London in search of a moneyed partner. Oh, then it was he learned—

The hell it is in suing long to bide.

He found capitalists particularly averse to speculate in a patent. It took him many days to find out what moneyed men were open to that sort of thing at all; and, when he got to them, they were cold. They had all been recently bitten by harebrained inventors.

Then he represented that it was a matter of judgment, and offered to prove by figures that his saw-grinding machines must return three hundred per cent. Those he applied to would not take the trouble to study his figures. In other words he came at the wrong time. And the wrong time is as bad as the wrong thing, or worse. Take a note of that please: and then forget it.

At last he gave up London in despair, and started for Birmingham.

The train stopped at Tring, and, as it was going on again, a man ran towards the third-class carriage Little was seated in. One of the servants of the company tried to stop him, very properly. He struggled with that official, and eventually shook him off. Meantime the train was accelerating its pace. In spite of that, this personage made a run and a bound, and, half leaping, half scrambling, got his head and shoulders over the door,

and there oscillated, till Little grabbed him with both hands, and drew him powerfully in, and admonished him. "That is a fool-hardy trick, sir, begging your pardon."

"Young man," panted the invader, "do you know who you're a speaking to?"

"No. The Emperor of China?"

"No such trash; it's Ben Bolt, a man that's bad to beat."

"Well, you'll get beat some day, if you go jumping in and out of trains in motion."

"A many have been killed that way," suggested a huge woman in the corner with the meekest and most timid voice imaginable.

Mr. Bolt eyed the speaker with a humorous glance. "Well, if I'm ever killed that way, I'll send you a letter by the post. Got a sweetheart, ma'am?"

"I've got a good husband, sir," said she, with mild dignity, and pointed to a thin, sour personage opposite, with his nose in a newspaper. Deep in some public question, he ignored this little private inquiry.

"That's unlucky," said Bolt, "for here am I, just landed from Victoria, and money in both pockets. And where do you think I am going now? to Chester, to see my father and mother, and show them I was right after all. They wanted me to go to school: I wouldn't. Leathered me; I howled, but wouldn't spell; I was always bad to beat. Next thing was, they wanted to make a tanner of me. I wouldn't. 'Give me fifty pounds and let me try the world,' says I. *They* wouldn't. We quarrelled. My uncle interfered one day, and gave me fifty pounds. 'Go to the devil,' said he, 'if you like; so as you don't come back.' I went to Sydney, and doubled my fifty; got a sheep-run, and turned my hundred into a thousand. Then they found gold, and that brought up a dozen ways of making money, all of 'em better than digging. Why, ma'am, I made ten thousand pounds by selling the beastliest lemonade you ever tasted for gold-dust at the mines. That was a good swop, wasn't it? So now I'm come home to see if I can stand the old country and its ways; and I'm going to see the old folk. I haven't heard a word about them this twenty years."

"Oh, dear, sir," said the meek woman, "twenty years is a long time. I hope you won't find them dead an' buried."

"Don't say that; don't say that!" And the tough, rough man showed a grain of feeling. He soon recovered himself, though, and said more obstreperously than ever, "If they are, I disown 'em. None of your faint-hearted people for me. I despise a chap that gives in before eighty. I'm Ben Bolt, that is bad to beat. Death himself isn't going to bowl me out till I've had my innings."

"La, sir; pray don't talk so, or you'll anger them above, and ten to one upset the train."

"That's one for me, and two for yourself, ma'am."

"Yes, sir," said the mild soul. "I have got my husband with me, and you are only a bachelor, sir."

"How d'ye know that?"

"I think you'd ha' been softened down a bit, if you'd ever had a good wife."

"Oh, it is because I speak loud. That is with bawling to my shepherds half a mile off. Why, if I'm loud, I'm civil. Now, young man, what is *your* trouble?"

Henry started from his reverie, and looked astonished.

"Out with it," shouted Mr. Bolt; "don't set grizzling there. What with this lady's husband, dead and buried in that there newspaper, and you, that sets brooding like a hen over one egg, it's a Quakers' meeting, or nearly. If you've been and murdered anybody, tell us all about it. Once off your mind you'll be more sociable."

"A man's thoughts are his own, Mr. Bolt. I'm not so fond of talking about myself as you seem to be."

"Oh, I can talk, or I can listen. But you won't do neither. Pretty company *you* are, a hatching of your egg."

"Well, sir," said the meek woman to Henry, "the rough gentleman he is right. If you are in trouble, the best way is to let your tongue put it off your heart."

"I'm sure you are very kind," said Henry, "but really my trouble is one of those out-of-the-way things that do not interest people. However, the long and the short is, I'm an inventor. I have invented several things, and kept them dark, and they have paid me. I live at Hillsborough. But now I have found a way of grinding long saws and circular saws by machinery, at a saving of five hundred per cent. labour. That saving of labour represents an enormous profit,—a large fortune; so I have patented the invention, at my own expense. But I can't work it without a capitalist. Well, I have ransacked London, and all the moneyed men shy me. The fools will go into railways, and bubbles, and a lot of things that are blind chance, but they won't even study my drawings, and figures, and I've made it clear enough too."

"I'm not of their mind then," said Bolt. "My rule is never to let another man work my money. No railway shares nor gold mines for Ben Bolt. My money goes with me, and I goes with my money."

"Then you are a man of sense; and I only wish you had money enough to go into this with me."

"How do you know how much money I've got? You show me how to turn twenty thousand into forty thousand, or forty thousand into eighty thousand, and I'll soon find the money."

"Oh, I could show you how to turn fifteen thousand into fifty thousand." He then unlocked his black bag, and showed Bolt some drawings that represented the grinders by hand at work on long saws and circular saws. "This," said he, "is the present system." He then pointed out its defects. "And this," said he, "is what I propose to substitute." Then he showed him drawings of his machines at work. "And these figures represent the saving in labour. Now, in this branch

of cutlery, the labour is the manufacturer's main expense. Make ten men grind what fifty used, you put forty workmen's wages in your pocket."

"That's tall talk."

"Not an inch taller than the truth."

Mr. Bolt studied the drawings, and, from obstreperous, became quite quiet and absorbed. Presently he asked Henry to change places with him; and, on this being complied with, he asked the meek woman to read him Henry's figures slowly. She stared, but complied. Mr. Bolt pondered the figures, and examined the drawings again. He then put a number of questions to Henry, some of them very shrewd; and, at last, got so interested in the affair, that he would talk of nothing else.

As the train slackened for Birmingham, he said to Henry, "I'm no great scholar; I like to see things in the body. On we go to Hillsborough."

"But I want to talk to a capitalist or two at Birmingham."

"That is not fair; I've got the refusal."

"The deuce you have!"

"Yes, I've gone into it with you; and the others wouldn't listen. Said so yourself."

"Well, but, Mr. Bolt, are you really in earnest? Surely this is quite out of your line?"

"How can it be out of my line if it pays? I've bought and sold sheep, and wool, and land, and water, and houses, and tents, and old clothes, and coffee, and tobacco, and cabs. And swopped—my eye, how I have swopped! I've swopped a housemaid under articles for a pew in the church, and a milch cow for a whale that wasn't even killed yet; I paid for the chance. I'm at all in the ring, and devilish bad to beat. Here goes—high, low, Jack, and the game."

"Did you ever deal in small beer?" asked Henry, satirically.

"No," said Bolt, innocently. "But I would in a minute if I saw clear to the nimble shilling. Well, will you come on to Hillsborough and settle this? I've got the refusal for twenty-four hours I consider."

"Oh, if you think so, I will go on to Hillsborough. But you said you were going to see your parents, after twenty years' absence and silence."

"So I am; but they can keep: what signifies a day or two more after twenty years?" He added, rather severely, as one whose superior age entitled him to play the monitor, "Young man, I never make a toil of a pleasure."

"No more do I. But how does that apply to visiting your parents?"

"If I was to neglect business to gratify my feelings, I should be grizzling all the time; and wouldn't that be making a toil of a pleasure?"

Henry could only grin in reply to this beautiful piece of reasoning; and that same afternoon the pair were in Hillsborough, and Mr. Bolt, under Henry's guidance, inspected the grinding of heavy saws, both long and circular. He noted, at Henry's request, the heavy, dirty labour.

He then mounted to the studio, and there Henry lectured on his models, and showed them working. Bolt took it all in, his eye flashed, and then he put on, for the first time, the coldness of the practised dealer. "It would take a good deal of money to work this properly," said he, shaking his head.

"It has taken a good deal of brains to invent it."

"No doubt, no doubt. Well, if you want me to join you, it must be on suitable terms. Money is tight."

"Well, propose your own terms."

"That's not my way. I'll think it over before I put my hand to paper. Give me till to-morrow."

"Certainly."

On this Mr. Bolt went off as if he had been shot.

He returned next day, and laid before Henry an agreement drawn by the sharpest attorney in Hillsborough, and written in a clerk's hand. "There," said he, briskly, "you sign that, and I'll make my mark, and at it we go."

"Stop a bit," said Henry. "You've been to a lawyer, have you? Then I must go to one too; fair play's a jewel."

Bolt looked disappointed; but the next moment he affected cheerfulness, and said, "That is fair. Take it to your lawyer directly."

"I will," said Henry; but, instead of a lawyer, he took it to his friend Doctor Amboyne, told him all about Ben Bolt, and begged his advice on the agreement. "Ought he to have the lion's share like this?"

"The moneyed man generally takes that. No commodity is sold so far beyond its value as money. Let me read it."

The purport of the agreement was as follows:—New premises to be built by Bolt, a portion of the building to be constructed so that it could be easily watched night and day, and in that part the patent saw-grinding machines to be worked. The expenses of this building to be paid off by degrees out of the gross receipts, and meanwhile Mr. Bolt was to receive five per cent. interest for his outlay and two-thirds of the profits, if any. Mr. Little to dispose of his present factory, and confine his patents to the joint operation.

Doctor Amboyne, on mature consideration, advised Little to submit to all the conditions, except the clause confining his operations and his patents. They just drew their pen through that clause, and sent the amended agreement to Bolt's hotel. He demurred to the amendment; but Henry stood firm, and proposed a conference of four. This took place at Doctor Amboyne's house, and, at last, the agreement was thus modified: the use of the patents in Hillsborough to be confined to the firm of Bolt and Little; but Little to be free to sell them, or work them, in any other town, and also free, in Hillsborough, to grind saws by hand, or do any other established operation of cutlery.

The parties signed; and Bolt went to work in earnest. With all his resolution, he did not lack prudence. He went into the suburbs for his

site, and bought a large piece of ground. He advertised for contracts and plans, and brought them all to Henry, and profited by his practical remarks.

He warned the builders it must be a fortress, as well as a factory; but, at Henry's particular request, he withheld the precise reason. "I'm not to be rattened," said he. "I mean to stop that little game. I'm Ben Bolt, that's bad to beat."

At last the tender of Mr. White was accepted, and, as Mr. Bolt, experienced in the delays of builders, tied him tight as to time, he, on his part, made a prompt and stringent contract with Messrs. Whitbread, the brickmakers, and began to dig the foundations.

All this Henry communicated to Grace, and was in high spirits over it, and then so was she. He had a beautiful frame made for the little picture she had given him, and hung it up in his studio. It became the presiding genius, and indeed the animating spirit, of his life.

Both to him and Grace the bright and hopeful period of their love had come at last. Even Bolt contributed something to Little's happiness. The man, hard as he was in business, was not without a certain rough geniality; and then he was so brisk and bustling. His exuberant energy pleased the inventor, and formed an agreeable relief to his reveries and deep fits of study.

The prospect was bright, and the air sunny. In the midst of all which there rose in the horizon a cloud, like that seen by Elijah's servant, a cloud no bigger than a man's hand.

Bolt burst into the studio one day, like a shell, and, like a shell, exploded.

"Here's a pretty go! We are all at a standstill. The brickmakers have struck."

"Why, what is the matter?"

"Fourpence. Young Whitbread, our brickmaker's son, is like you—a bit of an inventor: he altered the shape of the bricks, to fit a small hand-machine, and Whitbreads reckoned to save tenpence a thousand. The brickmakers objected directly. Whitbreads didn't want a row, so they offered to share the profit. The men sent two of their orators to parley: I was standing by Whitbread when they came up; you should have heard 'em; anybody would have sworn the servants were masters, and the masters negro slaves. When the servants had hectored a bit, the masters, meek and mild, said they would give them sixpence out of the tenpence sooner than they should feel dissatisfied. No; that wouldn't do. 'Well, then,' says young Whitbread, 'are you agreed what will do?' 'Well,' said one of the servants, 'we *will allow you to make the bricks*, if you give us the tenpence.'"

"That was cool," said Henry. "To be sure, all brainless beggars try to starve invention."

"Yes, my man; and you grumbled at my taking two-thirds. Labour is harder on you inventors than capital is, you see. Well, I told 'em I wondered at their cheek; but the old man stopped me, and spoke quite

mild: says he, 'You are too hard on us; we ought to gain a trifle by our own improvement; if it had come from you, we should pay you for it;' and he should stand by his offer of sixpence. So then the men told them it would be the worse for them, and the old gentleman gave a bit of sigh, and said he couldn't help that, he must live in the trade, or leave it, he didn't much care which. Next morning they all struck work; and there we are—stopped."

"Well," said Henry, "it is provoking; but you mustn't ask me to meddle. It's your business."

"It is, and I'll show you I'm bad to beat." With this doughty resolve he went off and drove the contractors: they drove the brickmakers, and the brickmakers got fresh hands from a distance, and the promise of some more.

Bolt rubbed his hands, and kept popping into the yard to see how they got on. By this means he witnessed an incident familiar to brickmakers in that district, but new to him. Suddenly loud cries of pain were heard, and two of the brickmakers held up hands covered with blood, and transfixed by needles. Some ruffian had filled the clay with needles. The sufferers were both disabled, and one went to the hospital. Tempered clay enough to make two hundred thousand bricks had been needled, and had to be cleared away at a loss of time and material.

Bolt went and told Henry, and it only worried him; he could do nothing. Bolt went and hired a watchman and a dog, at his own expense. The dog was shot dead one dark night, and the watchman's box turned over and sat upon, watchman included, while the confederates trampled fifty thousand raw bricks into a shapeless mass.

The brickmasters, however, stood firm, and at last four of the old hands returned to him, and accepted the sixpence profit due to the master's invention. These four were contribution men, that is to say they paid the Union a shilling per week for permission to make bricks; but this weekly payment was merely a sort of black-mail, it entitled them to no relief from the Union when out of work: so a three-weeks' strike brought them to starvation, and they could co-operate no longer with the genuine Union men, who were relieved from the box all this time. Nevertheless, though their poverty, and not their will, brought them back to work, they were all threatened, and found themselves in a position that merits the sympathy of all men, especially of the very poor. Starvation on one side, sanguinary threats on the other, from an Union which abandoned them in their need, yet expected them to stick by it and starve. In short, the said Union was no pupil of Amboyne; could not put itself in the place of these hungry men, and realize their dilemma; it could only see the situation from its own point of view. From that intellectual defect sprang a crime. On a certain dark night, Thomas Wilde, one of these contribution men, was burning bricks all by himself, when a body of seven men came crawling up to within a little distance. These men were what they call "victims," *i.e.*, men on strike, and receiving pay from the box.

Now, when a man stands against the fire of a kiln, he cannot see many yards from him; so five of the "victims" stood waiting, and sent two forward. These two came up to Wilde, and asked him a favour. "Eh, mister, can you let me and my mate lie down for an hour by your fire?"

"You are welcome," said honest Wilde. He then turned to break a piece of coal, and instantly one of those who had accepted his hospitality struck him on the back of the head, and the other five rushed in, and they all set on him, and hit him with cartlegs, and kicked him with their heavy shoes. Overpowered as he was, he struggled away from them, groaning and bleeding, and got to a shed about thirty yards off. But these relentless men, after a moment's hesitation, followed him, and rained blows and kicks on him again, till he gave himself up for dead. He cried out, in his despair, "Lord, have mercy on me; they have finished me," and fainted away in a pool of his own blood. But, just before he became insensible, he heard a voice say, "Thou'll burn no more bricks." Then the "victims" retired, leaving this great criminal for dead.

After a long while he came to himself, and found his arm was broken, and his body covered with cuts and bruises. His house was scarcely a furlong distant, yet he was an hour crawling to it. His room was up a short stair of ten steps. The steps beat him: he leaned on the rail at the bottom, and called out piteously, "My wife! my wife! my wife!" three times.

Mrs. Wilde ran down to him, and caught hold of his hand, and said, "Whatever is to do?"

When she took his hand the pain made him groan, and she felt something drip on to her hand. It was blood from his wounded arm. Then she was terrified, and, strong with excitement, she managed to get him into the house and lay him on the floor. She asked him, had he fallen off the kiln? He tried to reply, but could not, and fainted again. This time he was insensible for several hours. In the morning he came to, and told his cruel story to Whitbread, Bolt, and others. Bolt and Whitbread took it most to heart. Bolt went to Mr. Ransome, and put the case in his hands.

Ransome made this remark:—"Ah, you are a stranger, sir. The folk hereabouts never come to us in these Union cases. I'll attend to it, trust me."

Bolt went with this tragedy to Henry, and it worried him; but he could do nothing. "Mr. Bolt," said he, "I think you are making your own difficulties. Why quarrel with the Brickmakers' Union? Surely that is superfluous."

"Why, it is them that quarrelled with me; and I'm Ben Bolt, that is bad to beat." He armed himself with gun and revolver, and watched the Whitbreads' yard himself at night.

Two days after this, young Whitbread's wife received an anonymous letter, advising her, as a friend, to avert the impending fate of her husband, by persuading him to dismiss the police and take back his Hands.

The letter concluded with this sentence, "He is generally respected; but we have come to a determination to shoot him."

Young Whitbread took no apparent notice of this, and, soon afterwards, the secretary of the Union proposed a conference. Bolt got wind of this, and was there when the orators came. The deputation arrived, and, after a very short preamble, offered to take the sixpence.

"Why," said Bolt, "you must be joking. Those are the terms poor Wilde came back on, and you have hashed him for it."

Old Whitbread looked the men in the face, and said, gravely, "You are too late. You have shed that poor man's blood, and you have sent an anonymous letter to my son's wife. That lady has gone on her knees to us to leave the trade, and we have consented. Fifteen years ago, your Union wrote letters of this kind to my wife (she was pregnant at the time), and drove her into her grave, with fright and anxiety for her husband. You shall not kill Tom's wife as well. The trade is a poor one at best, thanks to the way you have ground your employers down, and, when you add to that needling our clay, and burning our gear, and beating our servants to death's door, and driving our wives into the grave, we bid you good-by. Mr. Bolt, I'm the sixth brickmaster this Union has driven out of the trade by outrages during the last ten years."

"Thou's a wrong-headed old chap," said the Brickmakers' spokesman: "but thou can't run away with place. Them as takes to it will have to take us on."

"Not so. We have sold our plant to the Barton Machine Brick-making Company; and you maltreated them so at starting that now they won't let a single Union man set his foot on their premises."

The company in question made bricks better and cheaper than any other brickmaster; but, making them by machinery, were *always* at war with the Brickmakers' Union, and, whenever a good chance occurred for destroying their property, it was done. They, on their part, diminished those chances greatly by setting up their works five miles from the town, and by keeping armed watchmen and police. Only these ran away with their profits.

Now, when this company came so near the town, and proceeded to work up Whitbread's clay, in execution of the contract with which their purchase saddled them, the Brickmakers' Union held a great meeting, in which full a hundred brickmakers took part, and passed extraordinary resolutions, and voted extraordinary sums of money, and recorded both in their books. These books were subsequently destroyed, for a reason the reader can easily divine who has read this narrative with his understanding.

Soon after that meeting, one Kay, a brickmaker, who was never seen to make a brick, for the best of all reasons, he lived by blood alone, was observed reconnoitring the premises, and that very night a quantity of barrows, utensils, and tools were heaped together, naphtha poured over them, and the whole set on fire.

Another dark night, twenty thousand bricks were trampled so noiselessly that the perpetrators were neither seen nor heard.

But Bolt hired more men, put up a notice he would shoot any intruder dead, and so frightened them by his blustering that they kept away, being cowards at bottom, and the bricks were rapidly made, and burnt, and some were even delivered: these bricks were carted from the yard to the building-site by one Harris, who had nothing to do with the quarrel; he was a carter by profession, and wheeled bricks for all the world.

One night this poor man's haystack and stable were all in flames in a moment, and unearthly screams issued from the latter.

The man ran out, half-naked, and his first thought was to save his good grey mare from the fire. But this act of humanity had been foreseen and provided against. The miscreants had crept into the stable, and tied the poor docile beast fast by the head to the rack; then fired the straw. Her screams were such as no man knew a horse could utter. They pierced all hearts, however hard, till her burnt body burst the burnt cords, and all fell together. Man could not aid her. But God can avenge her.

As if the poor thing could tell whether she was drawing machine-made bricks, or hand-made bricks!

The incident is painful to relate; but it would be unjust to omit it. It was characteristic of that particular Union; and, indeed, without it my reader could not possibly appreciate the brickmaking mind.

Bolt went off with this to Little; but Amboyne was there, and cut his tales short. "I hope," said he, "that the common Creator of the four-legged animal and the two-legged beasts, will see justice done between them; but you must not come here tormenting my inventor with these horrors. Your business is to relieve him of all such worries, and let him invent in peace."

"Yes," said Little, "and I have told Mr. Bolt we can't avoid a difficulty with the cutlers. But the brickmakers, what madness to go and quarrel with them! I will have nothing to do with it, Mr. Bolt."

"The cutlers! Oh, I don't mind them," said Bolt. "They are angels compared with the brickmakers. The cutlers don't poison cows, and hamstring horses, and tie them to fire; the cutlers don't fling little boys into water-pits, and knock down little girls with their fists, just because their fathers are non-Union men; the cutlers don't strew poisoned apples and oranges about, to destroy whole families like rats. Why, sir, I have talked with a man the brickmakers tried to throw into boiling lime; and another they tried to poison with beer, and, when he wouldn't drink it, threw vitriol in his eyes, and he's blind of an eye to this day. There's full half-a-dozen have had bottles of gunpowder and old nails flung into their rooms, with lighted fusees, where they were sleeping with their families; they call that 'bottling a man:' it's a familiar phrase. I've seen three cripples crawling about that have been set on by numbers and spoiled for life, and as many fired at in the dark; one has got a slug

in his head to this day. And, with all that, the greatest cowards in the world,—daren't face a man in daylight, any two of them; but I've seen the woman they knocked down with their fists, and her daughter too, a mere child at the time. No, the cutlers are men, but the brickmakers are beasts."

"All the more reason for avoiding silly quarrels with the brickmakers," said Little.

Thus snubbed, Mr. Bolt retired, muttering something about "bad to beat." He found Harris crying over the ashes of his mare, and the man refused to wheel any more machine-made bricks. Other carters, being applied to, refused also. They had received written warning, and dared not wheel one of those bricks for their lives.

The invincible Bolt bought a cart and a horse, hired two strangers, armed them and himself with revolvers, and carted the bricks himself. Five brickmakers waylaid him in a narrow lane; he took out his revolver, and told them he'd send them all to hell if one laid a finger on him: at this rude observation they fled like sheep.

The invincible carted his bricks by day, and at night rode the horse away to an obscure inn, and slept beside him, armed to the teeth.

The result of all which was that one day he burst into Little's studio shouting "Victory!" and told him two hundred thousand bricks were on the premises, and twenty bricklayers would be at work on the foundations that afternoon.

Henry Little was much pleased at that, and when Bolt told him how he had carted the bricks in person, said, "You are the man for me; you really are bad to beat."

While they were congratulating each other on this hard-earned victory, Mr. Bayne entered softly, and said, "Mr. White—to speak to Mr. Bolt."

"That is the builder," said Bolt. "Show him up."

Mr. White came in with a long face.

"Bad news, gentlemen; the Machine Brickmaking Company retires from business, driven out of trade by their repeated losses from violence."

"All the worse for the nation," said Bolt: "houses are a fancy article, got to be. But it doesn't matter to us. We have got bricks enough to go on with."

"Plenty, sir: but that is not where the shoe pinches now. The Brickmakers' Union has made it right with the Bricklayers' Union, and the Bricklayers' Union orders us to cart back every one of those machine-made bricks to the yard."

"See them —— first," said Bolt.

"Well, sir, have you considered the alternative?"

"Not I. What is it?"

"Not a bricklayer in Hillsboro', or for fifty miles round, will set a brick for us: and if we get men from a distance they will be talked away, or driven away, directly. The place is picketed on every side at this moment."

Even Bolt was staggered now. "What is to be done, I wonder?"

"There's nothing to be done, but submit. When two such powerful unions amalgamate, resistance is useless, and the law of the land a dead letter. Mr. Bolt, I'm not a rich man; I've got a large family; let me beg of you to release me from the contract."

"White, you are a cur. Release you? never!"

"Then, sir, I'll go through the court, and release myself."

Henry Little was much dejected by this monstrous and unforeseen obstacle arising at the very threshold of his hopes. He felt so sad, that he determined to revive himself with a sight of Grace Carden. He pined for her face and voice. So he went up to Woodbine Villa, though it was not his day. As he drew near that Paradise, the door opened, and Mr. Frederick Coventry came out. The two men nearly met at the gate. The rejected lover came out, looking bright and happy, and saw the accepted lover arrive, looking depressed and careworn: he saw in a moment something was going wrong, and turned on his heel with a glance of triumph.

Henry Little caught that glance, and stood at the gate black with rage. He stood there about a minute, and then walked slowly home again: he felt he should quarrel with Grace if he went in, and, by a violent effort of self-restraint, he retraced his steps; but he went home sick at heart.

The mother's eye read his worn face in a moment, and soon she had it all out of him. It cost her a struggle not to vent her maternal spleen on Grace; but she knew that would only make her son more unhappy. She advised him minutely what to say to the young lady about Mr. Coventry: and, as to the other matters, she said, "You have found Mr. Bolt not so bad to beat as he tells you: for he is beaten, and there's an end of him. Now let *me* try."

"Why what on earth can you do in a case of this kind?"

"Have I ever failed, when you have accepted my assistance?"

"No: that's true. Well, I shall be glad of your assistance now, heaven knows; only I can't imagine——"

"Never mind: will you take Grace Carden if I throw her into your arms?"

"Oh, mother, can you ask me?"

Mrs. Little rang the bell, and ordered a fly. Henry offered to accompany her. She declined. "Go to bed early," said she, "and trust to your mother. We are harder to beat sometimes than a good many Mr. Bolts."

She drove to Dr. Amboyne's house, and sent in her name. She was ushered into the Doctor's study, and found him shivering over an enormous fire. "Influenza."

"Oh dear," said she, "I'm afraid you are very ill."

"Never mind that. Sit down. You will not make me any worse, you may be sure of that." And he smiled affectionately on her.

"But I came to intrude my own troubles on you."

"All the better. That will help me forget mine."

Mrs. Little seated herself, and, after a slight hesitation, opened her battery thus:—"Well, my good friend, I am come to ask you a favour. It is to try and reconcile my brother and me. If any one can do it, you can."

"Praise the method, not the man. If one could only persuade you to put yourself in his place, and him to put himself in yours, you would be both reconciled in five minutes."

"You forget we have been estranged this five-and-twenty years."

"No, I don't. The only question is, whether you can and will deviate from the practice of the world into an obese lunatic's system, both of you."

"Try *me* to begin."

The Doctor's eyes sparkled with satisfaction. "Well, then," said he, "first you must recollect all the differences you have seen between the male and female mind, and imagine yourself a man."

"Oh, dear! that is so hard. But I have studied Henry. Well, there—I have unsexed myself—in imagination."

"You are not only a man but a single-minded man, with a high and clear sense of obligation. You are a trustee, bound by honour to protect the interests of a certain woman and a certain child. The lady, under influence, wishes to borrow her son's money, and risk it on rotten security. You decline, and the lady's husband affronts you. In spite of that affront, being a high-minded man, not to be warped by petty irritation, you hurry to your lawyers to get two thousand pounds of your own, for the man who had affronted you."

"Is that so?" said Mrs. Little. "I was not aware of that."

"I have just learned it, accidentally, from the son of the solicitor Raby went to that fatal night."

A tear stole down Mrs. Little's cheek.

"Now, remember, you are not a woman, but a brave, high-minded man. In that character you pity poor Mr. Little, but you blame him a little because he fled from trouble, and left his wife and child in it. To you, who are Guy Raby—mind that, please—it seems egotistical and weak to desert your wife and child even for the grave." (The widow buried her face and wept. Twenty-five years do something to withdraw the veil the heart has cast over the judgment.) "But, whatever you feel, you utter only regret, and open your arms to your sister. She writes back in an agony, for which, being a man, you cannot make all the allowance you would if you were a woman, and denounces you as her husband's murderer, and bids you speak to her and write to her no more, and with that she goes to the Littles. Can you blame yourself that, after all this, you wait for her to review your conduct more soberly, and to invite a reconciliation?"

Mrs. Little gave Doctor Amboyne her hand. "Bitter, but wholesome

medicine!" she murmured, and then was too overcome to speak for a little while.

"Ah, my good, wise friend!" said she at last, "thick clouds seem clearing from my mind; I begin to see I was the one to blame."

"Yes; and if Raby will be as docile as you, and put himself in your place, he will tell me he was the one to blame. There's no such thing as 'the one to blame;' there very seldom is. You judged him as if he was a woman, he judged you as if you were a man. Enter an obese maniac, and applies the art of arts; the misunderstanding dissolves under it, and you are in each other's arms. But, stop"—and his countenance fell again a little: "I am afraid there is a new difficulty. Henry's refusal to take the name of Raby and be his heir. Raby was bitterly mortified, and I fear he blames me and my crotchets; for he has never been near me since. To be sure you are not responsible for Henry's act."

"No, indeed; for, between you and me, it mortified me cruelly. And now things have taken a turn,—in short, what with his love, and his jealousy, and this hopeless failure to make a fortune by inventing, I feel I can bring him to his senses. I am not pleased with Grace Carden about something; but no matter, I shall call on her and show her she must side with me in earnest. You will let my brother know I was always on his side in *that* matter, whatever other offence I may have given him years ago."

"And I am on your side, too. Your son has achieved a small independence. Bayne can carry on the little factory, and Henry can sell or lease his patents; he can never sink to a mere dependant. There, I throw my crotchets to the wind, and we will Raby your son, and marry him to Grace Carden."

"God bless you, my good and true friend! How can I ever thank you?" Her cheek flushed, and her great maternal eye sparkled, and half the beauty of her youth came back. Her gratitude gave a turn to the conversation which she neither expected nor desired.

"Mrs. Little," said Doctor Amboyne, "this is the first time you have entered my den, and the place seems transformed by your presence. My youth comes back to me with the feelings I thought time had blunted; but no, I feel that, when you leave my den again, it will be darker than ever, if you do not leave me a hope that you will one day enter it for good."

"For shame!—At our age!" said the widow.

But she spoilt the remonstrance by blushing like a girl of eighteen.

"You are not old in my eyes; and, as for me, let my years plead for me, since all those years I have lived single for your sake."

This last appeal shook Mrs. Little. She said she could not entertain any such thoughts whilst her son was unhappy. "But marry him to his Grace, and then—I don't know what folly I might not be persuaded into."

The Doctor was quite content with that. He said he would go to Raby, as soon as he could make the journey with safety, and her troubles and her son's should end.

Mrs. Little drove home, a happy mother. As for the promise she had made her old friend, it vexed her a little, she was so used to look at him in another light; but she shrugged her maternal shoulders, as much as to say, "When once my Henry leaves me—why not?"

She knew she must play the politician a little with Henry, so she opened the battery cautiously. "My dear," said she, at breakfast, "good news! Doctor Amboyne undertakes to reconcile us both to your uncle."

"All the better. Mr. Raby is a wrong-headed man, but he is a noble-minded one, that is certain."

"Yes, and I have done him injustice. Doctor Amboyne has shown me that."

She said no more. One step at a time.

Henry went up to Woodbine Villa, and Grace received him a little coldly. He asked what was the matter. She said, "They tell me you were at the very door the other day, and did not come in."

"It is true," said he. "Another had just come out. Mr. Coventry."

"And you punished *me* because that poor man had called on me. Have you not faith in me? or what is it? I shall be angry one of these days."

"No, you will not, if I can make you understand my feelings. Put yourself in my place, dearest. Here am I, fighting the good fight for you, against long odds; and, at last, the brickmakers and bricklayers have beat us. Now you know that is a bitter cup for me to drink. Well, I come up here for my one drop of comfort; and out walks my declared rival, looks into my face, sees my trouble there, and turns off with a glance of insolent triumph." (Grace flushed.) "And then consider: I am your choice, yet I am only allowed to visit you once a week."

"That is papa's doing."

"No matter; so it is. Yet my rival can come when he pleases: and no doubt he does come every other day."

"You fancy that."

"It is not all fancy; for—by heaven, there he is at the gate. Two visits to my one; there. Well, all the better, I'll talk to *him*."

He rose from his seat black with wrath.

Grace turned pale, and rang the bell in a moment.

The servant entered the room, just as Mr. Coventry knocked at the door.

"Not at home to anybody," said she.

Mr. Coventry's voice was heard to say incredulously, "Not at home?" Then he retired slowly, and did not leave the neighbourhood. He had called at an hour when Grace was always at home.

Henry sat down, and said, "Thank you, Grace." But he looked very gloomy and disturbed.

She sat down too, and then they looked at each other.

Henry was the first to speak. "We are both pupils of the good Doctor. Put yourself in my place. That man troubles our love, and makes my heavy heart a sore heart."

The tears were in Grace's eyes. "Dearest," said she, "I will not put myself in your place; you would lose by that, for I love you better than myself. Yes, it is unjust that you should be allowed to visit me but once a week, and he should visit me when he chooses. I assure you I have permitted his visits out of pure good-nature; and now I will put an end to them."

She drew her desk towards her, and wrote to Mr. Coventry. It took her some little time. She handed Henry the letter to read. He took it in his hand; but hesitated. He inquired what would be the effect of it?

"That he will never visit me again till you and I are married, or engaged, and that is the same thing. Why don't you read it?"

"I don't know: it goes against me somehow. Seems unmanly. I'll take your word for it."

This charmed Grace. "Ah," said she, "I have chosen right."

Then he kissed her hands, and blessed her: and then she told him it was nothing; he was a goose, and had no idea what she would do for him; "more than you would do for me, I know," said she.

That he denied, and then she said she might perhaps put him to the proof some day.

They were so happy together, time slipped away unheeded. It was full three hours before Henry could tear himself away, though he knew he was wanted at the works; and he went out at the gate, glowing with happiness: and Coventry, who was ready to drop with the fatigue of walking and watching just above, saw him come out triumphant.

Then it was his turn to feel a deadly qualm. However, he waited a little longer, and then made his call.

"Not at home."

Henry, on his way to the works, looked in on his mother, and told her how nobly Grace had behaved.

Mrs. Little was pleased, and it smoothed down her maternal bristles, and made it much easier for her to carry out her design. For the first time since Mr. Carden had offended her by his cold-blooded treatment of her son, she called at Woodbine Villa.

Grace was at home to see her, and met her with a blushing timidity, and piteous wistful looks, not easy to misunderstand, nor to resist.

They soon came to an understanding, and Mrs. Little told Grace what Doctor Amboyne had promised to do, and represented to her how much better it would be for Henry to fall into his uncle Raby's views, than to engage in hopeless struggles like that in which Mr. Bolt and he had just been so signally defeated. "And then, you know, my dear, you could marry next month, you two; that is to say, if *you* felt disposed: I will answer for Henry."

Grace's red face and swimming eyes told how this shaft went home. In short, she made a coy promise that she would co-operate with Mrs. Little: "and," said she, "how lucky! he has almost promised to grant me the first favour I ask him. Well, I shall entreat him to be a good nephew, and do whatever dear Mr. Raby asks him. But of course I shall not say, and then if you do, you and I"—here the young lady cut her sentence very short.

"Of course not," said Mrs. Little. "*That* will follow as a matter of course. Now, my dear, you and I are conspirators—for his good: and we must write often and let each other know all we do."

With this understanding, and a good many pretty speeches and kisses, they parted.

Doctor Amboyne did not recover so quickly as they could have wished; but they employed the interval; feelers were adroitly applied to Henry by both ladies, and they were pleased to find that he rather admired his wrong-headed uncle, and had been deeply touched by the old gentleman's address to his mother's picture.

Bolt never came near him, and the grass was beginning to grow on the condemned bricks. In short, everything seemed to incline in one direction.

There was, however, something very serious going on out of their sight.

"Not at home!" That white lie made Mr. Coventry feel sick at heart. He went home disconsolate. The same evening he received Miss Carden's letter.

The writer treated him like a gentleman, said a few words about her own peculiar position, and begged him to consider that position, and to be very generous; to cease his visits entirely for the present, and so give himself one more title to her esteem, which was all she had to give him. This was the purport, and the manner was simply perfect, so gentle yet firm: and then she flattered his *amour propre* by asking that from his generosity which she could have taken as a right: she did all she could to soften the blow. But she failed. The letter was posted too soon after Henry's visit. Behind the velvet paw that struck him, Coventry saw the claws of the jealous lover. He boiled with rage and agony, and cursed them both in his fury.

After an hour or two of phrenzy, he sat down, and wrote back a letter full of bitter reproaches and sneers. He reflected. He lighted a cigar and smoked it, biting it almost through, now and then. He burned his letter. He lay awake all night, raging and reflecting alternately, as passion or judgment got the upper hand.

In the morning he saw clearer. "Don't quarrel with *her*. Destroy *him*." He saw this as plainly as if it was written.

He wrote Grace a few sad lines, to say that of course he submitted to her will. The letter ended thus: "Since I can do nothing to please you, let me suffer to please you: even that is something." (This letter brought the tears to Grace's eyes, and she pitied and esteemed the writer.)

He put on a plain suit, and drove into Hillsborough, burning with wild ideas of vengeance. He had no idea what he should do; but he was resolved to do something. He felt capable of assassinating Little with his own hand.

I should be sorry to gain any sympathy for him; but it is only fair the reader should understand that he felt deeply aggrieved, and that we should all feel aggrieved under similar circumstances. Priority is a title, all the world over; and he had been the lady's lover first, had been encouraged, and supplanted.

Longing to wound, but not knowing how to strike, he wandered about the town, and went into several factories, and talked to some of the men, and contrived to bring the conversation round to Little, and learn what he was doing. But he gathered no information of any use to him. Then he went to Grotait's place, and tried to pump him. That sagacious man thought this odd, and immediately coupled this with his previous denunciation of Little, and drew him on.

Coventry was too much under the influence of passion to be quite master of himself that day; and he betrayed to this other Machiavel that he wished ill to Henry Little. As soon as he had thoroughly ascertained this, Grotait turned coolly on him, and said, "I am sorry Mr. Little has got enemies; for he and his partner talk of building a new factory, and that will be a good thing for us: take a score of saw-grinders off the box." Then Coventry saw he had made a mistake, and left "The Cutler's Arms" abruptly.

Next day he took a lodging in the town, and went about groping for information, and hunting for a man, whose face he knew, but not his name. He learned all about Bolt and Little's vain endeavour to build, and went and saw the place, and the condemned bricks. The sight gratified him. He visited every saw-grinder's place he could hear of; and, at last, he fell in with Sam Cole, and recognized him at once. That worthy affected not to know him, and went on grinding a big saw. Coventry stepped up to him, and said in his ear, "I want to speak with you. Make an appointment."

Cole looked rather sulky and reluctant at being drawn from his obscurity. However, he named a low public-house, in a back slum, and there these two met that night, and for greater privacy were soon seated in a place bigger than a box and smaller than a room, with discoloured walls, and a rough wooden table before them, splashed with beer. It looked the very den to hatch villany in, and drink poison to its success.

Coventry, pale and red alternately, as fear and shame predominated, began to beat about the bush.

"You and I have reason to hate the same man. You know who I mean."

"I can guess. Begins with a Hel."

"He has wronged me deeply; and he hurt you."

"That is true, sir. I think he broke my windpipe, for I'm as hoarse as a raven ever since: and I've got one or two of the shot in my cheek still."

"Well, then, now is your time to be revenged."

"Well, I don't know about that. What he done was in self-defence; and if I play bowls I must look for rubs."

Coventry bit his lip with impatience.

After a pause, he said, "What were you paid for that job?"

"Not half enough."

"Twenty pounds?"

"Nor nothing like it."

"I'll give you a hundred to do it again, only more effectually." He turned very pale when he had made this offer.

"Ah," said Cole, "anybody could tell you was a gentleman."

"You accept my offer, then?"

"Nay, I mean it is easy to see you don't know trades. I mustn't meddle with Mr. Little now; he is right with the trade."

"What, not if I pay you five times as much? say ten times then; two hundred pounds."

"Nay, we Union chaps are not malefactors. You can't buy us to injure an unoffending man. We have got our laws, and they are just ones, and, if a man will break them, after due warning, the order is given to 'do' him, and the men are named for the job; and get paid a trifle for their risk; and the risk is not much, the trade stand by one another too true, and in so many ways. But if a man is right with the trade, it is treason to harm him. No, I musn't move a finger against Little."

"You have set up a conscience!" said Coventry bitterly.

"You dropped yours, and I picked it up," was the Yorkshireman's ready reply. He was nettled now.

At this moment the door was opened and shut very swiftly, and a whisper came in through the momentary aperture, "Mind your eye, Sam Cole."

Coventry rushed to the door, and looked out: there was nobody to be seen.

"You needn't trouble yourself," said Cole. "You might as well run after the wind. That was a friendly warning. I know the voice, and Grotait must be on to us. Now, sir, if you offered me a thousand pounds, I wouldn't touch a hair of Mr. Little: he is right with the trade, and we should have Grotait and all the trade as bitter as death against us. I'll tell you a secret sir, that I've kept from my wife"—(he lowered his voice to a whisper)—"Grotait could hang me any day he chose. You must chink your brass in some other ear, as the saying is: only mind, you done me a good turn once, and I'll do you one now; you have been talking to somebody else besides me, and blown yourself: so now drop your little game, and let Little alone, or the trade will make it their job to *lag you*."

Coventry's face betrayed so much alarm, that the man added, "And penal servitude wouldn't suit the likes of you. Keep out of it."

With this rough advice the conference ended, and Mr. Coventry went home thoroughly shaken in his purpose, and indeed not a little anxious

on his own account. Suppose he had been overheard! his offer to Cole was an offence within reach of the criminal law. What a mysterious labyrinth was this Trade confederacy, into which he had put his foot so rashly, and shown his game, like a novice, to the subtle and crafty Grotait. He now collected all his powers, not to injure Little, but to slip out of his own blunder.

He seized this opportunity to carry out a coup he had long meditated: he went round to a dozen timber-merchants, and contracted with them for the sale of every tree, old or young, on his estate; and, while the trees were falling like grain, and the agents on both sides measuring the fallen, he vanished entirely from Hillsborough and Bollinghope.

Doctor Amboyne's influenza was obstinate, and it was nearly a fortnight before he was strong enough to go to Cairnhope; but, at last, Mrs. Little received a line from him, to say he was just starting, and would come straight to her on his return; perhaps she would give him a cup of tea.

This letter came very opportunely. Bolt had never shown his face again; and Henry had given up all hopes of working his patents, and had said more than once he should have to cross the water and sell them.

As for Mrs. Little, she had for some time maintained a politic silence. But now she prepared for the Doctor's visit as follows: "So, then, you have no more hopes from the invincible Mr. Bolt?"

"None whatever. He must have left the town in disgust."

"He is a wise man. I want you to imitate his example. Henry, my dear, what is the great object of your life at present? Is it not to marry Grace Carden?"

"You know it is."

"Then take her from my hands. Why do you look so astonished? Have you forgotten my little boast?" Then, in a very different tone, "You will love your poor mother still, when you are married? You will say, 'I owe her my wife,' will you not?"

Henry was so puzzled he could not reply even to this touching appeal, made with eyes full of tears at the thought of parting with him.

Mrs. Little proceeded to explain: "Let me begin at the beginning. Dr. Amboyne has shown me I was more to blame than your uncle was. Would you believe it, although he refused your poor father the trust-money, he went that moment to get 2,000*l.* of his own, and lend it to us? Oh, Henry, when Dr. Amboyne told me that, and opened my eyes, I could have thrown myself at poor Guy's feet. I have been the most to blame in our unhappy quarrel; and I have sent Dr. Amboyne to say so. Now, Henry, my brother will forgive me, the Doctor says; and, oh, my heart yearns to be reconciled. You will not stand in my way, dearest?"

"Not likely. Why, I am under obligations to him, for my part."

"Yes, but Doctor Amboyne says dear Guy is deeply mortified by your refusal to be his heir. For my sake, for your own sake, and for Grace Carden's sake, change your mind now."

"What, go into his house, and wait for dead men's shoes! Find myself some day wishing in my heart that noble old fellow would die! Such a life turns a man's stomach even to think of it."

"No, no. Doctor Amboyne says that Mr. Bayne can conduct your business here, and hand you a little income, without your meddling."

"That is true."

"And, as for your patents, gentlemen can sell them to traders, or lease them out. My brother would make a settlement on Grace and you—she is his god-daughter—now that is all Mr. Carden demands. Then you could marry, and, on your small present income, make a little tour together: and dispose of your patents in other places."

"I could do great things with them in the United States."

"That is a long way."

"Why, it is only twelve days."

"Well, marry first," said the politic mother.

Henry flushed all over. "Ah!" said he, "you tempt me. Heaven seems to open its gates as you speak. But you cannot be in earnest; he made it an express condition I should drop my father's name, and take his. Disown my poor dead father! No, no, no!"

Now in reality this condition was wormwood to Mrs. Little; but she knew that if she let her son see her feeling, all was over. She was all the mother now, and fighting for her son's happiness: so she sacrificed truth to love with an effort, but without a scruple. "It is not as if it was a strange name. Henry, you compel me to say things that tear my heart to say, but—which has been your best friend, your mother, or your poor dear father?"

Henry was grieved at the question: but he was a man who turned his back on nothing. "My father loved me," said he: "I can remember that; but he deserted me, and you, in trouble; but you—you have been friend, parent, lover, and guardian angel to me. And, oh, how little I have done to deserve it all."

"Well, dear, the mother you value so highly, her name was Raby. Yes, love; and, forgive me, I honour and love my mother's name even more than I do the name of Little"—(the tears ran out of her eyes at this falsehood)—"pray take it, to oblige me, and reconcile me to my dear brother, and end our troubles for ever." Then she wept on his neck, and he cried with her.

After a while, he said, "I feel my manhood all melting away together. I am quite confused. It is hard to give up a noble game. It is hard to refuse such a mother as you. Don't cry any more, for mercy's sake: I'm like to choke. Mind, crying is work I'm not used to. What does *she* say? I am afraid I shall win her, but lose her respect."

She says she admires your pride; but you have shown enough. If you refuse any longer, she will begin to fear you don't love her as well as she loves you."

This master-stroke virtually ended the battle. Henry said nothing;

but the signs of giving way were manifest in him, so manifest that Mrs. Little became quite impatient for the Doctor's arrival to crown all.

He drove up to the door at last, and Henry ran out and brought him in. He looked pale, and sat down exhausted.

Mrs. Little restrained her impatience, and said, "We are selfish creatures to send you on our business before you are half well."

"I am well enough in health," said he, "but I am quite upset."

"What is the matter? Surely you have not failed? Guy does not refuse his forgiveness?"

"No, it is not that. Perhaps, if I had been in time—— but the fact is, Guy Raby has left England."

"What, for good? Impossible!"

"Who can tell? All I know is that he has sold his horses, discharged his servants all but one, and gone abroad without a word. I was the friend of his youth,—his college chum; he must be bitterly wounded to go away like that, and not even let me know."

Mrs. Little lifted up her hands. "What have we done? what have we done? Wounded! no wonder. Oh, my poor, wronged, insulted brother!"

She wept bitterly, and took it to heart so, it preyed on her health and spirits. She was never the same woman from that hour.

While her son and her friend were saying all they could to console her, there appeared at the gate the last man any of them ever expected to see—Mr. Bolt.

Henry saw him first and said so.

"Keep him out," cried the Doctor, directly. "Don't let that bragging fool in to disturb our sorrow." He opened the door and told the servant-girl to say "Not at home."

"Not at home," said the girl.

"That's a lie!" shouted Bolt, and shoved her aside, and burst into the room. "None of your tricks on travellers," said he, in his obstreperous way. "I saw your heads through the window. Good news, my boy! I've done the trick. I wouldn't say a word till it was all settled, for Brag's a good dog, but Holdfast's a better. I've sold my building-site to some gents that want to speculate in a church, and I've made five hundred pounds profit by the sale. I'm always right, soon or late. And I've bought a factory ready made—the Star Works; bought 'em, sir, with all the gear and plant, and working hands."

"The Star Works? The largest but one in Hillsborough!"

"Ay, lad. Money and pluck together, they'll beat the world. We have got a noble place, with every convenience. All we have got to do now is to go in and win."

Young Little's eyes sparkled. "All right," said he, "I like this way the best."

Mrs. Little sighed.

Glimpses of Christmas in the Days of Old.

Christmas revelry in the days of old was one thing in the palace, another in the convent, a third in the university, and a fourth among the people. At court it was mostly a serious affair. Every step of the games was carefully prearranged, and the courtiers laughed, quaffed, and tripped up one another's heels with the nicest attention to programme. That anomalous personage with the Hibernian title, the Ruler of Misrule, was, therefore, indispensable. In England he was a mere temporary autocrat, who vanished with the holidays. But they managed this, as well as other things, differently in France, where the Merry Monarch was a permanent institution. On his return from the crusades, Philip Augustus reorganized the not very reputable band that, time out of mind, had followed the court and ministered to its amusement. He mustered the females in one troop and the males in another, set a limit to their numbers, drew up rules for their guidance, and placed the whole under the command of the King of the Ribalds. An important personage was he, being the supreme judge of all offences committed within the precincts of the palace, as well as of disputed points at play, the executioner of his own sentences, and the keeper of the royal doors as well as of the royal dice. As porter he was assisted by his band, who were considerably more useful in their way, but hardly so splendid as the Cent Gardes. The ribalds received no particular stipend, dressed as they liked, or as they could, and were generally in tatters. They were armed, too, though not very regally, with stout cudgels, and formed, on the whole, some such picture as may be realized any fine day towards harvest-time on the quays of Dublin or Liverpool. Their leader, however, fared and dressed better. An edict issued by Philip the Hardy, 1260, fixed his salary at six deniers a year and his board, with forty sous additional for a robe and a valet. But this was the smallest part of his gains. He received numerous presents, was entitled to the clothes of the criminals he executed, and levied a poll-tax of five sols a year on the magdalens of Paris, and a house-tax of two sols a week on each of their haunts. So long as courtly tastes retained their primitive coarseness, the King of the Ribalds did very well as master of the revels. On common occasions he drew up his following blindfold in the tilt-yard, armed them with clubs, and turned a pig loose among them as the prize of the lady or gentleman who should happen to knock it down; he set them grinning through horse-collars and climbing greasy poles; and, in short, he manœuvred them through all the boisterous and often uncleanly pastimes of the Dutch kermis or

English wake. Nor was he without inventions more recondite, though hardly more refined, for the higher holidays. When Philip the Fair, for instance, entertained our Edward I., the King of the Ribalds made himself up as Master Reynard. After a few gambols in character, he drew on a surplice over his fox-hide, and sang the epistle. Having aped the priest sufficiently, he assumed mitre and crosier, and aped the bishop. Finally, donning the tiara and other papal vestments, he pursued the poultry on all fours, "biting and crunching" them as he caught them, to signify the rapacity of Boniface III. It was at Christmas, however, that the Ribald King appeared in his might as a caterer of amusement. "In one corner of the palace," says an old chronicler, describing one of his Yule pageants, "there was a group of savage men, who made hideous grimaces and combated comically. Beside them were three beautiful girls, playing the part of sirens—*tous nues*—which was a pretty sight, and singing songs and anthems." And not far off was a scaffold, whereon was built a mimic castle. This was assailed by one party representing gallant Frenchmen, and defended by another arrayed—how may be conjectured—as stupid Englishmen. The former charged to the cry of "Montjoie St. Denis!" and the latter shrieked their national slogan, "Rosbif! Goddam!" with all their might. The "goddams,"* of course, were vanquished, and, to the delight of the spectators, "had all their throats cut"—in appearance only, we trust; though, considering the character of the times, when a bit of slaughter was often no more than a good jest, it would have been more satisfactory if the annalist had said as much. As letters progressed these rude spectacles fell out of fashion, and with them the King of the Ribalds. Being ousted from the control of the revels by the male favourite of the day, he gradually subsided into a mere executioner, finally disappearing with his crew during the ascendancy of Agnes Sorel; the last who bore the title being Stephen Musteau, who died "in his house in the Rue des Juifs" in 1448.

The influence of his successors—the Bounivets and Villequiers—depending on their capacity for providing rich and varied entertainment, they took care to surround themselves with poets and artists skilful to contrive and order masque, ballet, and banquet. The magnificence of the last has been quite sufficiently described already. We suspect, however, that it was not always so wonderful as the court chroniclers of the period would have us believe. These gentlemen were, above all things, anxious for the glorification of their patrons, and what the feast lacked in reality they contrived to supply in description—with the aid of those classics who have celebrated the gastronomic glories of Vitellius and other imperial epicures. For all that, the mediæval banquet was a brilliant thing, especially towards the Renaissance, when taste began to select the fare, and genius to mould the plate, and especially to break the monotony of the feast with the happy invention of entremets, or spectacles

* Thus Joan of Arc, among others, designated the English of that day.

between the courses. One of these entremets was a ship in full sail, which was drawn into the banquet-hall. In the ship stood a knight in armour, leading a monstrous swan by a golden chain. There was a man inside the swan, and a "salvage" at each wing, while the knight himself was attended by pages feathered like eagles. Another entremet was a room that vented a procession among the guests. First trooped a crowd bearing torches; then followed a herald and two knights, laden with wreaths of flowers; and in the rear, on a white palfrey, trotted Joy, a beautiful girl, with her hair hanging loose. The herald pronounced a speech, the knights distributed their wreaths, and Joy, climbing the table with her steed, rode up to the lord of the feast, and presented him with—a kiss. A third of these spectacles was a mountain bearing a castle. At the windows appeared the four seasons—young beauties—scattering flowers. And on the towers, singing an ode composed for the occasion, stood four youths habited as the winds. The song ceasing, the rock opened, and out sprang a griffin, shooting flames from his mouth and nostrils. He was followed by his keepers—six savage men—who danced a morrice. The seasons and the winds then descended and danced another. Afterwards all danced together. Finally, the actors resumed their places, and the mountain was trundled out. Another of these mountains bore a garden of wax flowers, tended by a poet, who gathered roses, and presented them to the ladies with suitable rhymes. A third mountain had a fountain of scented water at each corner. Beside these fountains reclined four picturesque savages, and on the mountain-top stood a pretty girl in the guise of the fairy-queen. These characters descended, danced, and resumed their places; the fairy then raised her wand and struck the hill. Scores of little doors opened all over it, and out flew a multitude of sparrows. A second stroke released a crowd of rabbits, whose scurrying among the guests occasioned much laughter. A third brought forth a company of singing damsels. And a fourth let loose a troop of howling demons, who executed a number of acrobatic feats, and then ran off with the nymphs. The mountain, in short, was the favourite form of the entremet, and was reproduced year after year in every European court—with endless variety beyond the Channel, but, owing perhaps to our natural love of precedent, rather more monotonously in Britain.

On Twelfth Day, 1513, there was "a pageant" at Bluff Harry's court—a golden mountain, with a golden tree on the top. Out of this mountain issued a lady attended by children of honour, who danced a morrice before the king. When the dance was over, the lady and her train re-entered the mountain, which was then drawn out of the hall. The next time the mountain appeared it carried a beacon, which was watched by the king and five of his knights. The watchers descended and danced before the Queen. Then six ladies emerged from the mountain and danced in their turn, after which knights and dames danced together. This mountain—already patriarchal at the accession of the

Tudors—continued to make its appearance as regularly as Christmas, and in much the same form, for seventy or eighty years more.

The feast with its tissue of entremets was succeeded by the ballet, an entertainment of boundless variety, wherein the actors were the courtiers, and not unfrequently majesty itself. The ballet was not merely a series of picturesque attitudes and graceful evolutions. It always told a story, and that not seldom a complicated one. The subject was sometimes a chivalrous romance, or classic fable; but more frequently a mixture of both, or one of those long-winded allegories which the mediæval brain delighted to spin, and which modern sculpture,—such a thing is taste,—so long delighted to illustrate. The illustrations in flesh and blood, however, were far prettier things than those in bronze and marble. One of these ballets was in five parts—the subject being Fire. The first part represented Prometheus stealing the spark from heaven, and brought out a pretty array of Deities and Titans. In the second part Vulcan and Venus were exhibited forging the bolts of Jove amid a group of Cyclops and Cupids. The third pictured the fall of Phaëton, steeds and chariot of the sun included. The fourth told the love of Semele and its fatal catastrophe. And the fifth closed with Love and Beauty setting the universe on fire between them. Another ballet by six ladies and twelve gentlemen represented the carrying off of nymphs by satyrs. "The fable was so admirably expressed," says the old writer who describes it, "that every one could recognize by their gestures the feelings of the actors. Passion spoke in the movements of the satyrs, and embarrassment and terror in those of the nymphs. Strength and boldness characterized the former; shame and grief the latter. Nothing could be more vivid than the figures of this marvellous pantomime."

By the close of the ballet the excitement of the evening had usually reached its height, and then appeared the mask. This was a group of gentlemen in various grotesque disguises, who burst in among the guests and threw everything into confusion. They roared, romped, teased the ladies, sometimes frightened them, and always brought the mistletoe into ample and active use. There was a great deal of fun in this last of the frolics, and sometimes much fatality. For inebriety, the general failing of the good old times, was sure to be in the ascendant, and accidents happened that, in the period of torches and wooden palaces, more than once involved provinces in mourning. The most memorable of these accidents befel at Paris in 1393. The Christmas holidays were spent, but the riotous appetite of the pleasure-loving court being still unsated, a marriage was improvised between two of the royal attendants as an excuse for prolonging the merriment. A marriage feast in the middle ages was a rough affair at the best, but everything tended to render this one unusually licentious. It was, indeed, an indescribable mixture of high-birth ruffianism, horse-play, and obscenity, in which it was hard to say who was the coarser—the King of France at the head of his court, or the King of the Ribalds at the tail of his crew. Of the two the former probably

bore away the palm; for all through that disorderly day and still more disorderly night, he had a man at his elbow than whom there was none in Europe more prolific of unseemly devices. This was Sir Hugonin de Guisay, the idol of the reckless, the aversion of the orderly, and the detestation of the populace. And not without good reason. He delighted to exercise his wicked wit on tradesmen and mechanics, treating those he encountered in his walks as the Mohocks of a former generation were accustomed to treat their victims, pricking them with his spurs, and compelling them to creep on all fours and bark like dogs before he let them go. Towards midnight, when all were half mad with wine, De Guisay suggested a mask. These things, rough as they were, were usually prearranged. Everybody knew when to look for the maskers, and, in most instances, who they were. But the marriage had been too hasty for this; nobody now expected anything of the kind; and the King took the hint all the more eagerly. He retired, unobserved by the crowd, with De Guisay and four other wild ones—scions all of the noblest houses in France. The projector of mischief had a quantity of tow and a pitch-pot in readiness, and the tight dresses of the group were speedily covered with a very good imitation of the shaggy hide of the bear. Masks for the face were always at hand, and thus the travestie was effected in a very few minutes. Five of the gang were then bound together by means of a silken rope cut from the tapestry, and the sixth, the king, led them into the hall, where the thing took amazingly. "Who are they?" was the general cry; but that, of course, nobody could tell. At this instant entered the wildest of all the wild Dukes of Orleans. Hearing of the superior order of the fun going on at the palace, he had left his own amusements in another quarter, and hurried thither. He found the torch-bearers ranged close along the walls, and the inquisitive company gathered round the maskers. "Who are they?" hiccupped the three-parts intoxicated prince. "We'll soon find that out." And snatching a torch from one of the bearers, he staggered forward. Some gentlemen attempted to stay him, but he was obstinate and quarrelsome, and refused to be restrained, except by main force; and as this was not to be thought of with a prince of the blood, however fuddled or mischievous, they gave way. The prince lowered his torch to examine the nearest of the maskers. But hand and foot being equally unsteady, he brought the flame in contact with the tow, and the group was instantly in a bright flame. Presence of mind, or common sobriety on the part of spectators or actors, might have averted the results. But there was none of the latter there, and but two instances of the former. The youthful consort of the aged Duke of Berry seized the King, and enveloped him in her ample robe; thus he was saved. Another of the maskers, the young Lord of Nantouillet, noted for strength and agility, rent the silken rope with a wrench of his strong teeth—pitched himself like a meteor through the next window, and plunging into a cistern in the court, escaped with scarce a scar. As for the other four, they dragged hither and thither through the horrified mob, fighting with each other and

the flame, and uttering the most awful shrieks. Men who had gone unfaltering through a hundred fights sickened at the sight, and women fainted by scores. Roused by the uproar, all Paris was soon afoot in wild excitement, and crowded round the palace. A hundred reports were current—that the princes were engaged in deadly strife being the one most credited. At last the flame burnt out, and the four maskers lay a black and writhing heap on the floor. One of them was a mere cinder; a second survived till daybreak; a third died at noon the next day; and the fourth—the contriver of the mask—lived in horrible torments until the third day. "Bark, dog, bark!" yelled the Parisians as his body was borne to the grave.

Wherever there happened to be a choir, a school was maintained for the instruction of the choristers, where they were instructed in music, and the more promising among them prepared for the universities. To stimulate these youths in their studies,—with the hope, as Strype remarks, "that they might one day attain to the real mitre,"—the festival of the boy-bishop was devised. On the eve of St. Nicholas—the patron of school-boys—the election took place. This might have been free on the Continent—especially among the poor-scholars of Germany, who acknowledged little control during lessons, and none at all after,—but in England there is reason to believe that it was conducted much like the election of a real bishop. The boy-bishop then was pretty sure to be the good boy of the school—that is, if he were handsome and well shaped—qualifications even more essential than merit, as appears from the registers of York Cathedral. Every choir was provided with robes for his use, which, as shown by the list preserved in the Northumberland household book, were hardly less magnificent than those of the diocesan himself. They were provided by the founders and patrons, kept in repair at the expense of the parish, and renewed by donation and legacy. Among the records of the churchwardens of Lambeth there are various entries concerning the repair of the boy-bishop's vestments; and Archbishop Rotheram bequeathed his mitre to the college which he founded at Rotheram in 1481. On St. Nicholas's day the boy-bishop went to church in great state. In London he appears to have been mounted, for a statute of Old St. Paul's directs one of the canons of that cathedral to provide him with a quiet horse. Due care, too, was taken to secure him an adequate following. The statutes of St. Paul's School (1518) direct that every Childermas the pupils shall go to St. Paul's to hear the childe-bishop's sermon. They add that "after he be at the high mass, each of them shall offer a penny to the childe-bishop." His demeanour at church is thus described by Cyrus de Thuard, Bishop of Châlons, who abolished the festival in his diocese:—"This fine pontiff placed himself in the bishop's throne during the office of the day, surrounded by his boyish chapter. He and they performed the parts of bishop and canons; while the real canons took the places of the children, and acted in all respects up to the character." The boy-bishop went through all the ceremonies of the day, and even sang the mass. This is

denied, but there is abundance of proof. The records of Noyon say that he went through the *whole* service; the proclamation of Henry VIII., suppressing the boy-bishop, states that he said mass; he was permitted to do so by the statutes of Winchester College, and he was *ordered* to do it by those of Eton. Nobody, however, denies the fact of his preaching. "Suffer little children to come unto me," was always the text; and the discourse, evidently as much a portion of the properties as the crosier or mitre, was repeated year after year, and was just a moral lecture to children, and nothing more. After service the boy-bishop and his followers, assisted by a hired train of mountebanks and minstrels, promenaded the district in search of contributions. They sang gay songs, and indulged in laughter-moving antics, and returned to a feast provided by the churchwardens. The boy-bishop had two privileges: he could—and once, at Cambray, really did—fill up a vacancy occurring in the chapter during his term of office. And did he die during the same period, he was buried with all the pomp of a real bishop, as in the noted case at Salisbury. Boys were not the only actors in these odd ceremonies. They were got up, though not perhaps very generally, among the girls attending the conventual schools. This is stated in the proclamation of 1542. Grosteste, Bishop of Lincoln, also forbade the practice in his diocese at an earlier period; and Archbishop Peckham, writing to the nuns of Godstowe in 1278, enjoins that "public prayers be no longer said in church on St. Catharine's day by little girls."

The boy-bishop of the choir was a tame performance compared with that of the university. In the hands of the students the ceremonies of the day were anything rather than a mild imitation of the original rites. Wild burlesque, wilder fun, and reckless mischief characterized their proceedings. The service was uproar, and the sermon generally an audacious libel on existing authorities. They left the church to play, for the delectation of the mob, such a farce as only mediæval students could write or enact. This closed the short day, and then followed a torchlight procession through the streets, accompanied by a horrible tintamarre and all sorts of indescribable freaks; and generally closing in a conflict with the watch. So it happened in Paris on the eve of St. Nicholas, 1365. There was a formidable riot; but the peace-preservers being the stronger, the students were put to flight and hotly chased to the schools in the Rue de la Bucherie. Not content with their victory, the sergeants forced the gates and carried off numerous prisoners, whom they immured forthwith in the Châtelet. This was a palpable infringement of clerical privilege, and so these sergeants found it. Next day the captives were released with many apologies, and the captors locked up in their stead. The collegiate authorities were satisfied, but not so the students, who determined to take vengeance with their own hands on the first favourable opportunity. Such a one did not offer the next year. In 1367, however, the students obtained what they desired. After a stout fight, in which one or two were killed and many wounded,

among them the bishop, the watch was defeated, and the streets abandoned for the rest of the night to the students. This drew down the interference of the Parliament, which commissioned the commander of the watch to examine the wounded bishop as to the ringleaders in the riot. The Chevalier du Guet obeyed, and visited the Quartier Latin with a strong guard at his back. But it was not quite strong enough. Hardly had he entered the house where lay the wounded bishop than the doors were banged too, and himself and his men assailed by a formidable body of students, well thrashed, disarmed, stripped of their nether garments, and driven with ignominy out of the Quartier. The Parliament was furious, but there was no getting at the perpetrators of the outrage. So, determined that somebody should be punished, it sentenced all those who had taken part in the procession to traverse Paris in much the same plight as that in which the watch had so recently appeared. This the students did; and having made the *amende honorable* in the presence of the king, the magistrates, and the heads of the university, the perpetrators of the outrage were pardoned by proclamation, and admonished not to do the like again; but with very small effect.

The procession of the boy-bishop was prohibited by numerous councils, and obstinately warred with by monarchs and magistrates. It held its ground, however, as staunchly as the plague itself, until the general purification of opinion, and then it vanished like a mist.

The Revelry of the Clergy, or the Feast of Fools, was, beyond question, the perfection of Christmas frolic. This festival was invented, according to some, to wean the people from heathen observances, but in the opinion of the doctors of the Sorbonne, "that the folly which is natural to, and born with us, might exhale at least once a year." It was marked in the Calendar: *Festum Fatuorum in Epiphania, et ejus Octavia.* The learned entertained different views concerning its propriety. From some it met with unqualified approval, from others as unreserved reprobation. A Flemish divine declared in full council at Auxerre, that this festival was quite as acceptable to God as that of the Immaculate Conception, and met with much applause from his brethren. Thereupon Gerson, the most noted theologian of his day, stood up and asserted, amid equal approval, that "if all the devils in hell had put their heads together to devise a feast that should utterly scandalize Christianity, they could not have improved upon this one." And, whatever the fact might have been in his own times, Gerson's opinion is now undisputed. Thiers—not the historian of the Empire, but an ecclesiastic of the seventeenth century, great in most kinds of useless knowledge, and, therefore, well read about the Feast of Fools—says that this festival deserved to be called *La Fête du Diable*, and nearly all antiquaries say much the same. When the Feast of Fools began to be observed by the Christian clergy, it is impossible to tell. The period, however, was sufficiently early. Glimpses of it, or something very like it, are to be caught from time to time in the darkest ages. At Beauvais, for instance, in the year 500, a monkish writer shows

the clergy outside the church-doors on Christmas Day drinking wine out of pitchers, and exchanging witticisms and practical jokes with the passengers. A law of King Childebert's, dated 554 or thereabouts, forbids "the disorders that are perpetrated during the night of the eve of feasts, even those of Easter and Christmas, occasions when nothing is thought of but singing, drinking, and other debaucheries." Gregory of Tours mentions that in his time the *nuns* of Poictiers were peculiarly notorious for keeping these revels. And three centuries later, in 867, we find the Council of Constantinople proscribing similar observances among the Eastern clergy. If we are to credit Cedrenus, who wrote early in the eleventh century, it was the Patriarch Theophylact who first legalized these practices, A.D. 990. "Theophylact," says Cedrenus, "introduced" (that is, authorised and, probably, regulated) "the practice which prevails to this day of scandalizing God and the memory of his saints on the most splendid and popular festivals, by indecent and ridiculous songs and enormous shoutings, even in the midst of these sacred hymns which we ought to offer to the Divine Grace with compunction of heart for the salvation of our souls. But he, collecting a company of base fellows, and placing over them one Euthymius, surnamed Casnes, whom he also appointed superintendent of his church, admitted into the sacred service diabolical dances, exclamations of ribaldry, and ballads borrowed from the streets and vilest haunts." Whether it be as Cedrenus says or not, it is certain that, early in the eleventh century, the Feast of Fools was universally observed.

But it was observed with a great deal of variety. It seems to have been confined to the cathedrals, the collegiate churches, and the great monasteries. As to the parish churches and smaller convents, these, as we shall see, had an equivalent in such festivals as that of the Ass. Where the clergy were few the revels were simple; but when they happened to be numerous the ceremonies became more complicated. In this case the inferior clerks—the deacons and sub-deacons—had one feast, and the full-fledged priests another; nearly every locality also observed some peculiarity in the rites. These began with the election of the chief or chiefs, who were variously termed abbots, bishops, or popes of fools, cornards, or esclaffards. And there was quite as much variety in the period of election as in the title. At Viviers it took place on the 17th of December; in our own universities on the 21st; at Rome on the 10th of November; among the German students on Twelfth Day; and at Rheims on the 18th of July. In the last instance a carpet was spread and forms were arranged under a great elm-tree in front of the cathedral. There the whole chapter assembled, and elected the Abbot of Fools with as much gravity, debate, and intrigue as goes towards the appointment of more serious potentates. Immediately after the election the bells were set ringing—how, will be shown by the following incident, which occurred at Evreux in the days of King Stephen. Seeing that the deacons, who superseded the regular ringers on these occasions, had no purpose except

to make as much clamour as possible, and therefore rang so furiously as to damage bells and belfry, besides injuring and sometimes killing one another, the bishop prohibited this part of the performance. He did more. Having a shrewd notion that a mere prohibition would have little effect, he placed the legitimate ringers in the belfry, armed them with stout staves, and directed them to keep the place against all comers. The deacons, indignant at this unwarrantable interference with their admitted rights, and determined, so far as they could, to stand strictly on "the old lines of the constitution," laid vigorous siege to the belfry. The defence was creditable to the garrison, and several tonsured crowns were neatly cracked. Some of the assailants, however, clambering over the cathedral roof, while others broke down the door, the belfry was stormed at all points. The bishop's men, being mastered, were deprived of the keys, well cuffed, and then thrust out. The ringing that ensued was something awful. It was enough to make even a bishop indulge in strong language; and this one did not refrain. "Heavens!" exclaimed he, clapping his hands to his ears, "will nobody stop those infernal deacons?" Such an interjection was never uttered in vain by a man of rank in those days, and hardly had the bishop spoken when two of his gravest canons, Walter Deutelin and John Mansel, started off to the scene of action, with the view of reducing the uproar to some sort of moderation. This was not a judicious proceeding. In somewhere about seven minutes the bishop saw his dutiful canons swinging in the wind from the top of the belfry, about 200 feet from the ground. In each instance, indeed, the rope was passed under the arms, which was not quite so bad as if it had been knotted round the neck. Still, the situation was not an agreeable one. It is not pleasant to swing at such a height, even when the cord is thoroughly trustworthy. But here this was hardly the fact. The canons were exceedingly canonical in their proportions, and the ropes were neither new nor particularly strong. But interference was useless. So the canons retained their precarious position, and "hung and swung in the sight of men," and of a good many women and boys, too, until the diaconal idea of vengeance was satisfied. This, however, did not occur until three-fourths of the bells and several of the ringers had been reduced to the condition of Professor Puzzle's mouse-trap, that is, rendered *hors de combat*.*

The bell-ringing duly achieved, the Abbot of Fools was raised on the shoulders of his flock, who, chanting the *Te Deum* as they went, carried him in triumph to the chapter-house, where the rest of the chapter was assembled. Everybody, including the bishop, rose at his entrance, and did him reverence. Afterwards, all sat down to a feast, which was opened with a mock grace and closed with a burlesque hymn. The new abbot

* "If you please, sir," said the housemaid, "the trap won't catch no mice." "Why, Mary," pronounced the professor, after grave examination of the machine; "it is hors de combat!" "Oh," said Mary, "is that all? I thought it was broke."

was then mounted on an ass, with his face to the tail, and led in procession through the town, distributing ridiculous blessings among the people; and this portion of the ceremony was repeated every evening until the holidays closed.

The bishop or archbishop of fools—according to the dignity of the see—was elected by the clergymen in full orders, and installed in office with appropriate ceremonies. The whole chapter being gathered in the cathedral, he was clad in the bishop's robes and seated in the episcopal throne with all the usual honours. The service of the day was then chanted. At its close the almoner of fools called out "Silence, keep silence;" the choir replied, "Thank God." Then the bishop recited a comic benediction, and the almoner distributed equally comic indulgences —to some toothache or gout, to others liberty to drink when they were thirsty, and so forth.

In the numerous privileged chapels—those that acknowledged no superiors but his Holiness—the ruler of the frolics took the title of pope of fools, and was installed with a burlesque of the rites employed in the consecration of his prototype.

All these proceedings were merely introductory. The fête itself took place on Christmas Day, the 1st of January, Innocents' Day, or the Epiphany, which last was known in many quarters as "the excellent fête of fools." When there happened to be an abbot and a bishop of fools in the same place, it was often the custom to hold separate revels. But in the majority of instances the priest and deacons coalesced after the investiture of their respective chiefs. When the long-expected morning came, the clergy put on their best robes, and accompanied the bishop, the latter in full canonicals, to church, where his entrance was marked by a grand peal of the bells, and the most thunderous tones of the organ. He was then seated in the episcopal throne, and high mass commenced. At this point, all those who were not absolutely required to carry on the service stole out to change their robes. They soon reappeared grotesquely painted and masked, and accompanied by the more notorious of the rollicking blades of the neighbourhood in similar attire: some being dressed as jugglers, others like women, and others again like wild beasts or demons. Then—the service still going on—the maskers began their tricks. They threw summersaults, played all sorts of school-boy games, and made every conceivable noise. They placed a lighted stove on the altar, and roasted sausages at it; they sat down beside it and played at dice; they sang very profane songs; they burnt old shoes in the censers and held them under the nose of the officiating priest; they bedaubed and blackened his face, they threw coals at one another, and among the people; they shouted "strange oaths;" they even quarrelled and fought in downright earnest. And they closed the service with this singular performance: Half-a-dozen or more of them assuming lunacy, threw off every article of clothing, and were pursued round and round the church, inside and out, by their yelling comrades, who drenched them with water,

and everybody else who chanced to be looking on. A council held towards the close of the fifteenth century endeavoured to reform at least this portion of the fête. With this purpose it sagely enacted that naked men were no more to be hunted through the church on Christmas morning, but *only* through the cloisters; and that water alone was to be thrown at them, *and not the buckets too.*

Outside the church a scaffold was erected. This was brought into requisition immediately after the service, for the exhibition of a "farce." The farce, as we learn from the registers of the Church of St. Stephen, at Dijon, under the date of 1494, was always opened with a scene greatly in favour with the mob—the shaving of the precentor. He was an official who had charge of the choir; and, as Fosbrooke says, "was empowered to tug the ears and pull the hair of the boys, and thump the deacons and sub-deacons who told lies, or otherwise misconducted themselves." Generally speaking, he was a tyrant, a sort of mediæval Squeers; and when his victims had the shaving of him, they did it in perfection—not sparing him a single rasp or bucket of water. Indeed the same council that issued those judicious regulations respecting the nudities on Christmas morning, endeavoured in like manner to place limits to the torture of the precentor, forbidding his barbers to use more than three tubs of water in the operation. But of course their decrees were as little regarded in this instance as in the other, and the shaving went on pretty much as with seamen who cross the line for the first time. Indeed the ceremonies are so much alike, that we incline to think the marine romp derived from the monkish one. There was the same monstrous razor and disagreeable lather, and the same infinity of drenching—not a little of which fell to the lot of the crowd that grinned below. The farce that followed was always very satirical, still more personal, and excessively gross. It formed, indeed, a constant cause of bickering between the actors and the authorities, and was prohibited times without number. But being one of those things that education alone can put down, it defied magisterial interference to the very last.

The farce was followed by a procession—and such a procession! That of Silenus was nothing to it. There were musical instruments of all sorts: drums, old pots, trumpets, cowhorns, everything that could be made to emit a sound, and the harsher the better. All the mud-carts, well laden, were there, as well as numerous donkeys in fantastic harness, and one or two caravans hired for the purpose from travelling showmen. Mounted on these went the reverend gentlemen, in suitable attire. They promenaded the streets for hours, attended by a numerous crowd, and saluted everywhere with roars of laughter and showers of unsavoury missiles, which, especially the latter, they richly merited. Some of them blessed the spectators in language that sounded exceedingly like cursing; others bespattered them with mud; those on the donkeys treated them to comic songs; and those in the caravans with tumbling and tableaux-vivants that an English pen cannot describe, except as

infamous. Symbols and ornaments appeared in these processions, identical with those used in the pagan mysteries. Most of them have disappeared, chiefly during the turmoil of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A few specimens still remain in the possession of the curious. These, however, are diminishing daily, because even the antiquarian mania cannot always restrain the destroying hand of disgust. How came they into the hands of the Christian clergy? The question is suggestive. But hardly as suggestive as these facts. The Feast of Fools was vigorously and persistently opposed by the heads of the mediæval church. It was prohibited by bishop after bishop, and anathematized by council after council—the edicts levelled at it counting by hundreds, and dating from early in the twelfth century up to the sixteenth century. But quite in vain. It proved ineradicable from among the clergy; nay, it rather appeared to gather strength. And, strange as it may seem, it was widely prevalent among the nuns, who observed it with nearly as much licence, and adhered to it with equal obstinacy. And yet to-day it has vanished almost from memory. Which is the better—folly or schism, licentiousness or liberty? The choice must be made; where the latter is prohibited the former is sure to flourish in the rankest luxuriance.

The Abbot of Unreason, our English equivalent for the bishop of fools, was a much inferior personage. There was plenty of fun and horse-play exhibited under his rule, and occasionally some rough satire. But there was little or nothing of the audacious profanity and licentiousness that characterized the reign of the foreign potentate. A statute of Henry III., forbidding clergymen to play at dice at church, shows that—favoured probably by his French minions—the continental method of observing Christmas had made some progress in his day among our countrymen. The enactment, however, was not afterwards repeated; nor does it appear to have been required. From that time, at least, the Abbot of Unreason in Britain was seldom or never a clergyman. There was, indeed, such a personage attached to every cathedral and monastery, as well as to each municipality and baronial hall. He was, however, a lay servant or retainer; for, except in the case of the boy-bishop, his masters took no prominent part in the revels. The terms, therefore, Lord of Misrule and Abbot of Unreason were with us convertible. As to the office, it was not generally filled by election. At Court some poetasting knight or gentleman was nominated to it by the monarch or leading minister; in the country, it was filled by some younger brother or hanger-on; and at the universities a master of arts—a grave and reverend seignior, much more likely to restrain than to animate them—was appointed by the heads of the colleges to regulate the games. It was different among the people; but we must let Master Stubbs, the Puritan, speak on this point:—"All the wild heads of the parish, flocking together, choose them a grand captain of mischief, whom they ennoble with the title of Lord of Misrule; and him they crown with great solemnity, and adopt for their king. This king, anointed, chooseth four-and-twenty, forty, threescore, or a hundred

like himself, to wait upon his lordly majesty, and to guard his noble person. Then every one of these men he investeth with his liveries of green, and yellow, or some other light wanton colour; and as though they were not gaudy enough, they bedeck themselves with scarves, ribbons, and laces, hung all over with gold rings, precious stones, and other jewels. This done, they tie about either leg twenty or forty bells, with rich handkerchiefs in their hands, and sometimes laid across their shoulders and necks. Then have they their hobby-horses, their dragons, and other antics, together with their bawdy pipes and thundering drummers to strike the devil's dance withal. Then march this heathenish company towards the church, their pipes piping, their drums thundering, their bells jingling, their handkerchiefs fluttering about their heads like madmen, their hobby-horses and other monsters skirmishing among the throng. And in this sort they go to the church, though the minister be at prayer or preaching—dancing and singing with such a confused noise that no man can hear his own voice. And thus these terrestrial furies spend the Sabbath day. Then they have certain papers wherein is painted some babelerie or other of imagery work, and these they call my Lord of Misrule's badges or cognizances. These they give to every one that will give them money to maintain them in their heathenish devilry. And who will not shew himself buxom to them and give them money, he shall be mocked and flouted shamefully. Yea, and many times carried on a cow-staff and dived over head and ears in water, or otherwise most horribly abused." We strongly suspect Master Stubbs, like Juvenal, had a sneaking kindness for the abuses he so racily describes. However that may be, he certainly does not exaggerate with respect to the treatment in store for those who did not show themselves "buxom" to the revellers and their chief, as a certain apparitor attached to the archiepiscopal court of St. Andrew's once proved to his sorrow. This officer, with rare audacity, ventured to serve letters of excommunication issued against the Lord of Borthwick, while the inmates of the castle were celebrating Christmas, and met with the fate of many an Irish "process-server" in the good old days when Irishmen were more like themselves than they are now, and preferred a frolicsome vengeance any day in the week to a fatal one. Having discharged his duty, the apparitor was seized by the Abbot of Unreason and his crew, taken to the mill-stream and thoroughly well ducked. He was then compelled to eat his letters of excommunication to the last shred, and dismissed with the warning that all similar documents "should gang the same gate." Nor was Stubbs less correct in the other portions of his vivid account, as the following passage attests: "In 1440 one Captain John Gladman, a man ever true and faithful to God and the King, and constantly sportive, made public disport with his neighbours at Christmas. He traversed the town on a horse as gaudily caparisoned as himself, preceded by the twelve months, each dressed in character. After him crept the pale attenuated figure of Lent, clothed in herring-skins, and mounted on a sorry horse, whose harness was

covered with oyster-shells. A train fantastically garbed followed. Some were clothed as bears, apes, and wolves; others were tricked out in armour; a number appeared as harridans with blackened faces and tattered clothes; and all kept up a promiscuous fight. Last of all marched several carts, whereon a number of fellows dressed as old fools sat upon nests and pretended to hatch young fools."

In parish churches, and wherever the clergy were not sufficiently numerous to conduct the Christmas revels themselves, they united for the purpose with the people. In these cases there was much sameness in the proceedings. The Flemings, for instance, repeated the Feast of Noël year after year, and from one end of the country to the other, with little or no variation. And the French country parsons and their rustic flocks reproduced the Feast of the Ass with just as much servility.

The Feast of Noël was celebrated by a procession that started from the church-door, made the circuit of the parish, and ended where it began. In front marched the curés and choristers, bearing crosses, banners, and relics, and occasionally singing anthems. After them came a young girl representing the Virgin, and a young man rather lightly clad and ornamented with a pair of wings as the angel Gabriel. Then followed a cardboard cock with a child inside. This was succeeded by a cow, a goat, four sheep, and an ass, or rather, by models of these animals, each containing a boy. A fool mounted on a hobby-horse and provided with bells and bauble closed the array. Every now and then the procession halted. The angel recited the salutation and kissed his companion, who said, "Fiat"* —"So be it." Then, one after another, the cock crew the words "*Puer natus est nobis*,"—"Unto us a child is born;" the cow lowed, "*Ubi?*"—"Where?"—the sheep maaed, "Bethlem;" and the ass brayed, "He-hawmus"—to signify *Eamus*—"Let us go thither." And then, as the goats and the fool had nothing in particular to add, the procession moved on, until the next halting-place was reached, when the performance was repeated.

The Feast of the Ass was very similar, but rather more pretentious, and, perhaps from some mystic sympathy between the hero and his worshippers, much more widely spread. Authorities were not quite agreed as to what particular ass was to be honoured in this feast. Nor was this to be wondered at, considering the variety from which they had to choose. There were Balaam's, Abigail's, the Shunamite's, and a hundred other scriptural and very estimable asses; to say nothing of the unscriptural, but none the less wonderful, beast of Zedekias the Jew, which had reproved the unbelief of his master by falling prostrate in the mud before the host. And few of these animals could complain of neglect. But decidedly the favourites were the beast used in the flight from Egypt and the one bestridden by Balaam. The former, known as the Holy Ass, was said to have crossed the seas dryshod to Italy. Dying there, its bones were long preserved in an artificial ass, under the guardianship

* A friend at our elbow prefers to render this, "Do it again."

of four canons, who, of course, took care to parade the relics in the view of the faithful as often as possible. The feast originated, then, in Italy, but it was speedily domiciled in France, where—especially during the residence of the Popes at Avignon—it obtained much greater respect than on its native soil, and where, surviving most other mediæval matters of the sort, it was observed at Bourges so late as 1682. Bourges, indeed, was one of its principal seats, the people of that town being so infatuated with the Holy Ass that they adopted it for the city arms, where it figured for many a day, seated like a burgomaster in an easy chair. When the feast was in honour of Balaam's charger, it came off on Christmas Day, as at Rouen and Sens. In the other instance it was deferred until the 14th of January; but there seems to have been little difference in the proceedings—Balaam appearing mounted at the one festival, and afoot at the other, while the rest of the characters remained unaltered. The procession left the church, traversed a certain circuit, and returned to the starting-point. A body of priests and choristers formed the advanced guard. Then came the ass, a wooden model containing a boy. On his back rode Balaam, dressed like an astrologer, or the Virgin, represented by a pretty girl nursing a doll. Behind the principal personage marched a long array of patriarchs and prophets—Moses, with his rod; David, in green, in company with Goliath, who carried a false head; Samson drawing a pasteboard lion; and, last of all, the poet Virgil, along with the Sibyls. There were many halts, during which the prophets chanted versicles and conversed in character, while some of them repeated a characteristic feat: David, for instance, knocking down Goliath, and striking off his head; and Samson fencing with his plaything, and pulling a honeycomb out of his mouth. The crowd entered the church on its return, singing Latin rhymes in praise of the ass and his fête, and he-hawing lustily. The ass and its rider were then placed beside the altar, and the service began—and a very peculiar service it was. That in use at Sens was composed by Peter of Corbeil, who died bishop of the diocese in 1220. The manuscript is still preserved in the cathedral. Its silver binding is covered with grotesques, and its pages are bordered by figures of bacchantes and bacchanals in every attitude. The service consisted of a mass of odd matter, called the "prose of the ass," but mostly rhyme—half Latin, half French—interwoven with the ritual of the day. In it, the first syllable of the hallelujah was always lengthened into he-haw, and every one of the hymns had a suitable refrain, which the priests led off, and the people took up with exceeding heartiness. The service was further enlivened by a good deal of pantomime and broad farce, enacted by the patriarchs. At the close of the rites the following couplet was sung, as the manuscript directs, "*a grosse voix*," by four canons:—

Hæc est clara dies clararum, clara dierum;
Hæc est festa dies festarum, festa dierum.
He-haw, he-haw, he-haw, master ass.

Directly afterwards the deacon, turning towards the people, exclaimed, "Ita missa est — he-haw, he-haw, he-haw-aw-aw," and the people responded, "Deo gratias—he-haw, he-haw-aw-aw," which closed the service. "This feast of the ass was assuredly idolatrous," says an old writer; "and," he adds, with a turn of thought altogether mediæval, "the invention of the devil, that monkey and fool whom God Almighty keeps for his amusement."

Akin to the Feast of the Ass, though hardly so prevalent, was that of the Wise Men. This was observed at Milan, its original seat, in 1336, as follows:—Foremost in the Twelfth-Day procession, mounted on great horses and richly robed, marched the three kings. They were attended by numerous pages and followed by their guards and a great crowd. A tall mast supporting a golden star was borne before them to the pillars of San Lorenzo—sixteen scathed and shattered columns, now supporting nothing, that greatly puzzle the antiquary. Here Herod with his scribes and his wise men awaited them, and the scene described by the Evangelist, with sundry adjuncts not noticed in Scripture, was enacted. From the columns, still being preceded by the star, they adjourned to the ancient Church of Eustorgia. There, in the neighbourhood of the sarcophagus which once contained the relics that Barbarossa carried off to bestow on Cologne, they found what they sought in the manger and duly presented their gifts.

Christmas was not exclusively appropriated to pleasure-seekers and their ministers. Our ancestors were a drug-loving race, and they greatly esteemed the medicines compounded at holy seasons. The apothecary, therefore, was always very busy at Christmas. Then the rhinoceros-horn was powdered into an infallible antidote against poison; mummies were moulded into comfits to be swallowed by those who had met with contusions; and human grease was distilled for the relief of any afflicted with rheumatism. Then, too, as Van Helmont directs, the black goat, having his hind legs tied to his ears, was suspended by the horns from the ceiling of the laboratory and bled in the tail—the slow-falling drops being received in a glass and dried in a furnace as a remedy for pleurisy. And, especially, then was the human skull triturated for the use of the epileptic. But it was not every cranium that could thus be used. The druggists of the Middle Ages were fastidious on this point. No head was permitted to pass through their hands unless it had been bleached on the gibbet for a sufficient period—that is, until the muscular covering had been quite consumed and replaced by a green mould much resembling the moss on the bark of an old oak. Most of these heads, as Pomet tells us, came from Ireland—a country which of old was chiefly known to foreigners as the seat of this ghastly traffic. These, and other repulsive medicines, were considered all the more efficient if the criminal had been executed during the Christmas holidays. Nor were such desiderata at all rare. Indeed, two or three hundred years ago a hanging or a heading ranked with a tournament in attraction, and no fête or festival was thought complete

without several, of which we could give examples almost without end. The spectators gathered to these exhibitions to be excited and amused. Nor were they the only ones who regarded them as a species of comedy. In most instances the criminals entertained the same opinion, and took care to do due honour to their part as principal performers, and to give all satisfaction to the crowd by a bold and even facetious demeanour in the cart and on the scaffold.

Another Christmas amusement much in vogue in the good old times was seeing the devil. "You would not believe how many young gentlemen tease me to show them the fiend between Christmas and Twelfth Night"—said one of the many who professed to manage the exhibition—"and I always gratify them,—for a consideration. A quarter of a league hence there is a capacious souterrain" (probably the catacombs) "with numerous windings. When anybody wants to see the devil I lead him thither. But before I allow him to enter I make him do a few things. He has first to pay his fee, forty-five to fifty pistoles. I then make him swear never to reveal what he may see or hear. Afterwards cautioning him on peril of his life to abstain from mentioning any holy word or name I lead him into the cavern. At the threshold I pause to make sundry fumigations and to pronounce several incantations in choice gibberish. When this is over the curious fool and myself are sure to hear, far down in the darkness, the rattling of chains and the growling of big dogs, neither of them pleasant sounds, considering the hour and the place, and especially our purpose. I then question my employer if he has any fear, informing him, at the same time, that a failure of courage is certain to result in some fearful catastrophe. In most cases the reply is in the affirmative, and I lead my gentleman out of the cave, reprimand him severely on account of his impertinent curiosity, and—keep his money. If, however, he declares that he is not afraid—as a few do—I lead him slowly forward, muttering many frightful words as we go along. Having reached a certain spot I redouble my invocations and work myself up into quite a fury. At the proper time six men dressed like fiends, whom I have previously concealed in the place, jump up from a hole, throw a shower of flaming rosin and fireworks round, and indulge in a satanic dance. By the light of these flames we perceive, close at hand, a monstrous goat fastened with chains, painted vermilion, as if they were red hot, and by his side two mastiffs similarly chained, and having their muzzles fast in wooden pipes shaped like speaking-trumpets. The men prick the animals, which caper and yell. And these yells, reverberating among the caverns, are so horrible, that, well as I know the cause, they often make my own hair stand on end. This goes on for ten minutes or so. Then the furies rush forward to torment my devil-seeker, pinching, kicking, and cuffing him, and thwacking him with sand-bags, until I am compelled to drag him out half dead. Then, the flames and fires having disappeared, and the horrible cries ceased, my employer gradually recovers his spirits. I take

advantage of this to show him what a dangerous and useless curiosity it is to wish to see the devil, and entreat him to abandon it for the future. And this I assure you he never fails to do."

Christmas, like other festive seasons, but more than any other, was a favourite with conspirators. Where treachery existed it seldom failed to prefer the masquerades of Yule for its work. It was then that Chatel attempted the life of Henri Quatre; that the friends of Richard II. plotted to murder Bolingbroke; that Henry III., of France, struck down his arch-enemy Guise; that the Lollards mustered against Henry V.; that the Forest Cantons expelled the Austrians; that Cæsar Borgia trapped and slaughtered the Orsini; and that Fiesco exploded his renowned conspiracy. Christmas, too, was a chosen time with the old warriors for the surprise of towns. They calculated that the garrisons would then keep unusually careless watch, and, generally speaking, they were right; consequently, the mediæval annals teem with stories of ingenious and daring escalades, achieved in the midst of revelry by the Dugueselins, the Douglasses, and the Mannys. Most of these were very stirring affairs, and one or two rather singular. Prominent among the latter is this one, which occurred in the South of France, on New Year's eve, 1577. Villefranc and Montpazier were adjacent towns in Périgord. The inhabitants, like those of Dinant and Liege, and many other neighbours in the good old times, hated one another devoutly. How the feud arose was unknown, as was the time when, but certainly it had not lost strength by the lapse of ages. In the religious wars Montpazier took one side and Villefranc, of course, took the other. There resulted much mutual insult, a good deal of robbing, a little murder, and occasionally, but not often, some fighting. At length, when warm with Christmas cheer, and ready for any mischief, the merry men of Villefranc bethought them of their neighbours at Montpazier, and took it into their heads to make them a very early New Year's call. Accordingly, sending their wives and children to bed, they set out about ten o'clock at night, on the 31st of January, and reached Montpazier in a couple of hours. Not a sentinel was to be seen: so they scaled the walls without being discovered. The place was profoundly quiet, and, strange to say, the visitors found nobody but non-combatants in it. There was no resistance, and therefore no slaughter, but there was plenty of mischief of other sorts. Towards daybreak the plunderers left the town, with its women weeping and its children howling, and their own shoulders tolerably well laden. They marched home without accident through a dense New Year's fog; but when they entered Villefranc they verily believed that they had been travelling in a circle, and had got back again to Montpazier. The scene upon which they entered was precisely identical with the one they had left. Here, as there, the drawbridge was down, the gate wide open, and the place strewn with torn garments and broken furniture. They were soon, however, enlightened as to their whereabouts and the meaning

of the confusion when their screaming children and exasperated dames rushed out, but not exactly to bless their triumphant return. It then appeared that the men of Montpazier had formed the same idea as themselves, and had realized it with as much success. The feelings of the heroes may be fancied. Seeing no particular advantage in this kind of warfare the rival towns made peace, restored the plunder, forgot the other injuries which about balanced one another, and determined to go no more a-roving so late on New Year's eve.

A vision rises before our mind's eye. Wavy and unsubstantial as a drifting cloud, it seems for a moment to assume consistence. It is the interior of a vast cathedral—above, dimly lighted and hung with dreamy banners; and below, thronged with splendid shadows: princes and ambassadors, cardinals and nobles, bishops and knights. The oceanic boom of the organ ceases. There is a pin-drop silence. A stately phantom, crowned and robed by the altar, attracts all eyes. The scene takes life, the faces assume individuality—Gerson, Hallam, D'Ailly here—proud electors and prouder patriarchs there—and yonder Sigismund. We recognize the Council of Constance, and the German monarch exercising an old imperial right to read one of the lessons of the day. Then figures, banners, and pillars melt into a shapeless mist that disappears in the depths of the past. It is our last glimpse of Christmas in the days of old.

Shamrockiana.

CHAPTER II.

The Pre-Unionists.

The Parliamentary life of Ireland, in so far as regards those oratorical displays which formed its most brilliant ornament, has had a brief history.

If we look back to the time which preceded George III., we shall find little to interest in the debates, and even less to admire. The King's Government was carried on without any impediment from an organized opposition, nor had the House fashioned itself into those forms of party which in our own day have so distinctly marked out the contending armies of politics. The Irish Parliament presented the spectacle of a mere council, in which the acts of the Government were ratified, and wherein the few dissentients to English rule were classed amongst that impracticable people who were assumed to represent a very uncultivated and scarcely civilized nation.

If we turn to the newspapers of the time, a very few and unsatisfactory lines are all that we find to denote a debate, nor do we chance upon a single name which has served to relieve by its brilliancy the long gloomy night of hopeless inaction that prevailed over Ireland. The oratory of the House, in such specimens as have reached us, was poor, commonplace, and weak. There was no preparation, and as little was there of that spontaneous eloquence which so mainly contributed to illustrate the debates of a later period. In fact, if we see little that denotes a high intellectual standard of the time, we see just as little of those traits and characteristics which we like to deem national.

Burke called the debates of Walpole's day "parochial discussions," and the lowering epithet might with full truth be applied to those deliberations, whose subjects were some petty local matter, undignified by any bearing upon the real condition of the country, and unadorned by even a passing gleam of statesmanship or political knowledge.

A coarse slipshod style, disfigured by occasional tawdry illustration, was the recognized habit of the House: the tone of the parish vestry, dashed with the exercise of the schoolboy. And so generally accepted was this, that many thought public business could not be conducted in any other fashion, and that a manner which it would be libellous to call conversational was the appropriate method to discuss any question of public interest.

The first innovator upon this dreary habit was Single-speech Hamilton, who came over to Ireland as secretary to Lord Halifax. His polished periods and finished oratory bore every trace of care and preparation, and still more strongly evidenced the fact that he possessed Edmund Burke as his private secretary. He had, with all the clearness of close reasoning and accurate logic, a copious flow of language, admirably relieved by illustration, and occasionally rising to the highest flight of poetical imagery.

The example could not be long without followers, and John Hely Hutchinson soon distinguished himself by a character of eloquence, of which the debates had long been barren. He was a man of a very high order of ability, and yet he was one who availed himself more in public life of a consummate knowledge of society, an intense social tact, than was the habit of the day to employ. As Hardy says of him, he saw what the House would bear, and never went beyond it; and, like an accomplished Minister of a recent day, he had an almost instinctive appreciation of the opportune moment—of the temper of his contemporaries, and of those passing moods of impetuosity or dogged caution which beset large assemblies of men.

His command of wit, especially sarcastic wit, was considerable, but so restrained by self-command,—so checked by an assumed deference for the House—that in reality a licence was allowed to him very rarely accorded to others.

It is no light praise of him to say that in his personal contests with Flood he is supposed to have had the advantage—at least, the gay and sportive style of his replies, the unfailing readiness of his epigram, and the neatness of his sarcasm, were well suited to the conventional temper of the day, and where Flood displayed the stern and almost gloomy recesses of a capacious mind, Hutchinson's playful ease and graceful imagery carried the day in his favour. In Hamilton's words, "He was a craft for all weathers."

It was no detraction to his merits, before an Irish audience, that there was a theatrical air in his oratory. Indeed, his friendship for Quin, and his love of the stage, tinctured the whole character of his mind, and imparted a something of dramatic effect to all his displays in public. He left the Opposition for a Prime Sergeancy in 1766, and subsequently became Provost of Trinity College,—a step which closed against him all the rewards of his own profession, and prematurely completed a career that might have led to the highest honours.

A number of capable and very gifted men now suddenly burst forth before the public eye. It seemed as though the dormant intelligence of the land but needed one spark of genius to kindle and quicken it into life. Amongst them—I take them at random—were Andrews, Perry, Malone, Cox, Fitzgerald, the Knight of Kerry, admirable debaters, who would have won honour and distinction in any assembly of Europe. The fashion of the day required that men of fortune should be educated for the Bar,

which thus imparted an accuracy of reasoning and a careful precision of expression to minds cultivated in every branch of polite literature, and avowedly pre-eminent in all the graceful accomplishments of foreign travel.

It is no vain boast to declare that the Irish gentleman of that day was the most finished type of "gentleman" to be found in Europe. There were blended with all the required advantages of a most refined education certain traits of race, certain national characteristics, which served to set off these accomplishments: light and joyous temperaments, chastened by the most courtly good breeding, daring courage, and sportive ease, chivalrous devotion to ladies, coupled with an almost reckless intrepidity, and a sense of honour only too punctilious in its exactions. All these met in a society where scholarship was prized, and conversational excellence valued, and where to be distinguished was to be regarded as the winner of a great reward. There was nothing gladiatorial in the display where all were athletes, and with those gifts which would make one man now-a-days sought after and courted, society at large was so imbued, that personal pre-eminence was hardly possible.

A number of names rise to my memory at this moment, not one of whom would not well serve to illustrate the character I have claimed for that age. Hussey Burgh, for instance, a man of the most cultivated mind, with that easy eloquence which intercourse with the world confers upon men of refinement; he could enliven the dullest subject by his wit, and interest the coldest by the impassioned flow of his eloquence.

Scarcely anything of his, however, has come down to us; and yet we would willingly know more of him who, alluding to some coercive laws of England with reference to the Volunteers, said, "Such laws are sown as dragons' teeth, and arise armed men."

The reporters of those days were unhappily very unfit for their calling, and we find in a debate on the Mutiny Bill, when Burgh quoted an opinion of Sergeant Maynard, he is represented in the paper of the next morning as having appositely introduced a saying of an eminent Sergeant-Major!

It would not be easy to conceive anything drearier than the columns of an Irish newspaper of that day. There is one feature, however, in which they bear a most unhappy resemblance to the journals of our own time—the record of outrage and violence is the same. Then, as now, the tenure of land was the source of endless strife and contention; not, however, that resistance to law had taken the form of an organized system as now we see it. It was rather that a general lawlessness prevailed in every condition of life. In the upper classes there was duelling, great extravagance in living, and exaggerated notions on the score of honour. In the humbler ranks general improvidence, indolence, and a reckless indifference to consequences, which led them to hold life cheaply, and to risk it freely on very slight provocation.

It is not easy to conceive a state of society which combined and actually brought into close contact traits of character and habits so totally unlike, and even contradictory, high intellectual culture, polished manners,

chivalrous devotion to women, and scrupulous regard for personal honour, with riotous living, unbridled libertinism, organized clubs for abduction, and incessant quarrels on most frivolous pretexts; and it was thus that the vices of the gentry "run to seed" had scattered a baneful crop throughout the land, and the peasant had learned to imitate after his own fashion the insubordinate ways and opinions of the landlord.

Sir Jonah Barrington is not the sort of witness one would place on the table to sustain a question whose accuracy we would uphold. His memoirs, however, have a truthfulness perfectly distinct from their reference to individual fact. The light they throw, the colour they impart to the picture of Ireland is correct. The strange jumble of all that was courteous, kind, generous, and self-devoted, with a great deal that was semi-barbarous, coarse, thoughtless, and undignified, was to be found at the close of the last century. Rank imposed no restrictions upon unseemly conduct, and station involved no obligations as to behaviour before the world. There was no curb upon personal eccentricity, but rather a popular voice in its favour; and the man who engaged himself in some absurd wager, or accomplished some hazardous but good-for-nothing feat, was sure of an enthusiastic popularity.

There was a total absence of all seriousness in every condition of life. It would seem as if no one imagined himself engaged in any other than a light and playful occupation, and thus not only the Bar, the Bench, but even the Bishops, made their jokes, and capped their epigrams on events which in any other land would have been treated with all the solemn dignity of deep importance.

Whatever claims a man's public life may have had upon him, however so great the responsibilities of his station, or the calls of duty, the demands of conversation superseded them all, and the repute of a clever conversor or a brilliant narrator was a more coveted ambition than of almost any other success. Some of this grew out of the nature of the national temperament, which disposed men to value those displays of very varied and almost contradictory qualities, but a great deal more came out of the growing conviction that Ireland's days as a nation were numbered, that her life as a province was about to begin, and that no high rewards would any longer befal those who linked their fortunes with the falling country; and, like the crew of a sinking ship, they abandoned themselves to the orgie of despair—to stifle the cries of their agony, they raised the wilder shouts of debauch.

It was to this sentiment, disorganizing all sense of public honour and private shame, deadening men to the opinion of the world, and demoralizing the very heart of the nation, that Lord Castlereagh owed all his success in that wholesale and unblushing corruption by which he bought the Act of Union. He first taught men to despair of the craft, before he began to bargain with them for the sale of the wreck. The Irish Parliament was discredited before it was put up to sale!

To the reckless levity of the higher classes and the hopeless barbarism

of the people, the "*bourgeoisie*" opposed a spirit, which, if not always guided by absolute wisdom, still strongly evidenced their sense of patriotism. A meeting was held in Dublin of the freemen and freeholders, over which the high sheriff presided, in which a resolution was passed, "That until the grievances of this country be removed"—and the grievances alluded to were entirely those of a commercial character—"we pledge ourselves neither to import nor consume any of the manufactures of Great Britain, nor will we deal with any merchant or shopkeeper who shall import such manufactures; and that we recommend the adoption of this course to all our countrymen who regard the welfare or commerce of Ireland." The bold defiance of this challenge, and the establishment of the Volunteers—a force which in its equipment of cavalry, artillery, and infantry, constituted a perfect army—alarmed the Government of England to that extent that the Act of Union became determined on, and the only question remained as to the mode by which it was to be effected.

These Volunteers were a very remarkable force. Raised ostensibly for defence against invasion, they constituted, in reality, a great national army, and scarcely a man of independent position in the land did not belong to that body. They accepted no commission from the Crown, nor any direct connection with the Government. They named their own officers, accepted no pay, and until their numbers and extension rendered private effort unequal to the charge, provided their own arms. Not very willing, indeed, to arm men who avowed such sturdy independence, the Government ultimately accorded them 70,000 stand of arms, and in so far, at least, legalized and accepted their position.

Many who had fought in the American War of Independence, and had returned to Ireland, now joined this force, and their adhesion was sedulously courted by the Volunteers. The leaders were in every instance men of station and character, the well-known Lord Charlemont being the commander-in-chief.

We are constantly assured within and without the walls of Parliament, that we have done great things for Ireland within the last thirty or forty years: reversed much that was cruel and unjust, and have by milder laws, and the influence of education, given a powerful aid to the advancement and the prosperity of Ireland; and although there would be much to say in favour of all this, it might nevertheless be asked, Have we succeeded in connecting Ireland to England so effectually—have we so impressed the weaker country with the benefits of being yoked to the stronger one—and have we imbued Irishmen generally with the loyalty we like to call British—that any Minister of the Crown would now, in the year of grace 1869, recognize the existence of such a force as that volunteer army of Ireland, or dare to meet Parliament with the assurance that he had armed or equipped them?

Has all our legislation, then, been in vain? Have we done too much or too little? have we made the English hold on Ireland less firm and

less secure? or are we simply only on a stage of that journey which shall ultimately assure us of the affections of Ireland?

The ready test by which the Great Duke was wont to measure the success of government in any country was the amount of troops necessary to hold it; and certainly, by this test, the Ireland of our own day gives us no cause of exultation over the Ireland of the past.

In answer to the address on opening the Parliament of '79, Henry Grattan moved, "That we beseech your Majesty to believe that it is with the utmost reluctance we are constrained to approach you on the present occasion, but the constant drain to supply absentees, and the prohibition of our trade, have caused such calamity, that the natural support of our country has decayed, and our manufacturers are dying of want; famine stalks hand in hand with hopeless wretchedness, and the only means of succour lies in the opening of a free export trade, and to let your Irish subjects enjoy their birthright."

Flood, Hutchinson, George Ogle, and Edward Newenham, followed on the same side, and in glowing language supported the spirit of the amendment; and at last Hussey Burgh, rising from the Treasury bench, declared "that the high office which he held could hold no competition with his principles or his conscience, and that instead of mere supplication, he would suggest an amendment, that no temporary expedient could suffice to save the nation from the ruin that impends it."

Such a declaration from such a man produced an immense effect, and the scene of excitement which the House presented is perfectly indescribable. Many supporters of the Government rose and crossed the floor of the House, members of the Viceregal household amongst them; and as the amendment was carried almost in a shout of exultant triumph, the ladies waved their handkerchiefs from the galleries, and the cheers of the spectators could only be suppressed with difficulty. The citizens without soon caught the joyful tidings, and the streets roared with ringing cheers of delight, and a paroxysm of wild enthusiasm seized on the city as the Volunteers beat to arms to line the streets, and do honour to the patriots as they should issue from the House.

Perhaps of all the men who swayed the hearts of his countrymen by his eloquence, and by the warm glow of his patriotism kindled in Ireland a sense of national independence, there is not one who can dispute the palm with Henry Grattan. Grattan was small and slightly built, but although to appearance of weakly frame, was wiry and muscular, and so redolent of power was his temperament, that many who heard him speak came away with the impression that he was a man of bold and commanding presence—a strange error, but one which many have owned they have fallen into with regard to Lord Palmerston, whom really it is not always easy to remember as a man of low stature.

Grattan's features—with an intensely melancholy cast of expression—were finely and delicately cut: the eyes beaming with a look of gentleness peculiarly engaging, and the mouth strongly marked with those traits of

humour which in him, however, were always subordinated to deep purpose and serious effort.

It was said he took Chatham for his model, and there were certainly many points of resemblance between them. Still Grattan's manner was distinctive enough to reject all idea of imitation, and there were traces of that Celtic nature so evident about him, it would have been impossible for him to have conformed to any discipline that should have curbed the imaginative discursiveness of his mind, and the play of a fancy that soared to the highest flights of poetry. His own adoration of Chatham—of whom he said, "Modern degeneracy had not reached him, the features of his character had the hardihood of antiquity, his august mind overawed majesty itself," — may have contributed to the impression that he had taken him for his model. There was, however, in Grattan one characteristic eminently individual, and, in a great degree, Celtic. He was extremely antithetical, not so much from any deficiency in the power of graduated reasoning and close logical ability, as from his instinctive quickness of perception, amounting to positive impatience, which rejected the slow march of a demonstration, when by a bound he could grasp the proof that lay under his hand. Wide and great as were his intellectual powers, there was that in his temperament aërial and lofty that soared high above them. Engaged with a great subject, or with one to which his genius had lent greatness, his enthusiasm knew no bounds. All the resources of that splendid intellect came forth in glittering array, and no man could marshal them with such terrible effect: lofty and impassioned appeal, noble sentiment, classic allusion, brilliant imagery, the most polished wit, sarcasm the most withering, and, not least of all, a tone of tenderness that vibrated in every heart that heard him. All were his, and none could vary, combine, or alternate them with more consummate art.

Above all his intellect rose his personal nature. There never lived a more generous, more forgiving, more kindly man—none who could dwell with more heartfelt pathos on the ties of friendship, nor one who could depict an adversary with more generous justice.

The charm that surrounded him in private life, they who knew him in his intimacy speak of as something of actual fascination. There was not one of his great powers that he could not bring, reduced to the meridian of daily life, to the intercourse of society. Without a touch of pedantry, he gave to common conversation the elegance of literary culture, and this without a vestige of the great political leader, or ever overbearing by his superiority the least venturesome or ambitious about him.

His opposite in many respects, and his great rival in parliamentary distinction, was Flood. He was slow, laboured, and methodical; uniting habits of untiring industry with almost intuitive quickness of perception; making a strange contrast at times between the measured flow of his words and the rapidity and intensity of his conceptions. In retort, and especially in sarcastic insinuation, he had no equal. There was a slowness in his utterance that seemed sententious, and his tall quaint figure, and his face,

careworn and gaunt, gave a peculiar significance to the taunts he uttered with all the seriousness of a solemn conviction.

From that severe and stern countenance, unrelieved by a smile, the words of reproof or insult came doubly embittered; and when he arose to speak, there was felt through the House that thrill of expectation which men feel when some painful act of sacrifice is to be accomplished.

Of all the orators of his time none more required to be heard rather than reported; for, though slow and measured at first, there was about him, when roused, a whirlwind rapidity of thought and expression that carried the hearer irresistibly with him, and gave his eloquence the force of a torrent.

His taunts had a rancorous savagery, too, that left indelible mischief behind them, and his caustic indifference to the pain he created heightened their insult.

His career in England was brief, and a failure. He arose to speak on a measure on which he was not prepared, and induced by the deference of the House to continue, he uttered some plausible and ill-timed generalities, and sat down amidst the exultation of his adversaries, and the total discomfiture of his friends. His generous rival said of him "he was an oak of the forest, too grand and too deep-rooted to be transplanted," and though he lived to have some successes in the English House, they were far and away below the reputation he had brought with him from the sister country.

It may not, perhaps, be matter of regret, but it is noteworthy to contrast the withering sarcasm, the almost scathing irony of that day with the flippant levities and pointless impertinences which men utter now in the sharp conflicts of personal attack; and it would be a pleasant self-flattery if we could be able to assure ourselves that this altered tone was owing to our advance in civilization, our greater refinement and more polished culture. Certainly, the tame rebukes and wordy warnings of the present day read very flatly beside the glistening sharpness of those witty passages which men exchanged in the Irish House, and it is as well for the happiness of our great dialecticians that they lived not when Flood, and Grattan, and Corry, and Hussey Burgh bartered the "amenities of debate," and shot the barbed arrows of their sarcasm into the chinks of each other's armour.

The interior of the Irish House of Commons was well adapted to add dignity and impressiveness to the character of the debates. A spacious rotunda, surrounded with a wide gallery supported on columns, was lighted from a lofty dome, the whole rich in tasteful and splendid ornamentation. The front rank of the gallery was usually occupied by ladies of the first rank and station, and behind them sat the students of Trinity College, to whom admission was freely conceded on their appearing in academic costume. The members of the House always wore full court-dress, and the whole scene, in consequence of this attention to externals, gained immensely in effect and magnificence. There was, too, a very polished courtesy observed in all the forms of debate, regulated as they were by an etiquette which had its basis in the strictest punctilio of

personal honour, and, though language was used at times whose virulence and severity could not be surpassed, there was a thorough understanding that the speaker would not disclaim the responsibility, or plead the privilege of debate when without the walls of the House.

The chivalrous tone of the day—and there is no denying that such a tone prevailed in all the relations of society—had unquestionably its origin in the forms and manners of the House; and in the same way all social intercourse benefited by the example of men who strove to express themselves with accuracy and eloquence, and who brought to the discussions of politics every aid that culture or refinement could bestow.

If the occasion would permit it one might stop here and consider how very little the two great legislative acts of England—the Union and the establishment of Maynooth—served to answer the intentions of the founders. It is only necessary to refer to the debates in the Irish House to show that the demands of the national party were not only more moderate and more reasonable than the pretensions of modern patriotism, but that they were urged in language more deferential towards England, and without menace or insult whatever. All that Grattan put forth had been already proclaimed by Molyneux, and supported by Swift, nearly a century before. The temperate demand for mere justice to Ireland cost the Irish their Parliament, a measure as mistaken and as unsatisfactory in result, as that institution to educate home-bred priests, to escape the contamination of French Jacobinism, has proved itself: being, in a great degree, the nursery of all the disaffection and illegality we are now witnessing in Ireland.

CHAPTER III.

A Page of Biography supplied.

Sir Jonah Barrington is a sort of "Brummagem" Herodotus, and, if not equal to the great Greek in picturesque eloquence or descriptive charm, is more than his match in inventive power. His "Memoir"—bating that small quality of truthfulness—is, however, amusing. It is true, in his account of Irish extravagance and reckless living, it would have been hard for him to err on the score of exaggeration. The social condition of Ireland, at the time he speaks of, was one of unbridled licence, and any eccentricity of conduct was pardonable if it only contained some humoristic ingredient or some droll situation. He makes, however, at times, very high pretensions to morality himself, and takes a stand in censuring the habits of the day, which, if we could only suspect him to be serious, would be simply gross hypocrisy; and there is a story told of him which he has *not* included in his memoirs, but which is fully as indicative of the habits of his day as anything recorded in that veracious history.

Sir Jonah, though a Judge of the Admiralty Court, and in receipt of

a very fair income, had contrived, by the liberal use of a great variety of vices, to embarrass himself to that extent, that he was reduced, as a last resource, to make terms for his retirement from office, and escape to the Continent, where he could live unmolested by creditors and untortured by duns.

To do this empty-handed, was, however, no part of his plan; and to evacuate the fortress with bag and baggage was a matter which required some address. It chanced that in some moment of unusual pressure Sir Jonah had been reduced to pawn all his plate — of which he had a considerable quantity—some being of family origin, and, consequently, especially dear to a nature so impressed with a feudal regard for ancestry, and a very feudal contempt for common honesty.

This plate had been confided to the keeping of a certain well-known pawnbroker, called Dan Malone, a man of some wealth, but chiefly celebrated for the hardness of his bargains and a most miserly disposition. He was a dry, laconic, ill-natured old fellow, with whom few but the poorest people ever dealt, for, be it remembered, men and women of condition at that period were not above resorting to the pawnbroker's in their moments of pressing necessity. Dan's forbidding exterior and coarse manners, however, excluded him completely from this walk of business, and limited him to clients of the humblest order.

Whether for greater secresy in the transaction, or for some other motive unexplained, is not easy to conjecture, but it was to this man that Barrington resorted in his emergency. The plate was pledged for some hundred pounds, which he could not now command, and he was very unwilling to quit the country and forfeit—as he should do—such a valuable deposit.

He had already made arrangements for a little farewell dinner to some ten or twelve of his most intimate friends, amongst whom were a Bishop of Waterford and a Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas. There was also a Peer—I believe Lord Granard,—and three or four were men high at the "Bar," and already looking to the "Bench." It is important to bear in mind the rank and social standing of the company to understand—what, indeed, is the chief *portée* of the anecdote — the social morality of the day. To these choice friends he communicated his plan of action and obtained their pledge of concurrence and support.

This done, he repaired to Malone's house, which stood in an obscure part of the town called "Smock Alley." "Dan," said he, gaily, as he entered, "don't look glum at me, old boy, I'm not come to ask a 'long day' for the interest, or try to squeeze a ten-pound note out of you; it's another errand brings me here. There are two or three old friends of mine — Chief-Justice Fitzgerald and Dr. Marley, Bishop of Waterford amongst them—have a great desire to make your acquaintance. They have heard of your quaint dry humour, your sly drollery, and that admirable gravity which you preserve in your funniest sallies; and they asked me to make up a little dinner and include you in the company. I hope you'll

not refuse me; our day is Thursday next; promise now, like a good fellow, you'll be one of us."

Overwhelmed at first by such an honour, Malone no sooner recovered himself than he declined the invitation, and explained how impossible it would be for a man in his station, and with his habits, to mix in such company. He was equally prompt, too, in disclaiming the very slightest pretension to the qualities of wit and humour ascribed to him.

"Come, come," said Barrington, "you may refuse our society, if you will. You may say you'll not know us, and I can't help it; but I'll be shot if you shall do it on the plea that I have mistaken your talents or misled my friends on the subject of them. Why, man, I never come over here for a talk with you that I don't carry away some dry bit of Irish humour, some quaint morsel of native drollery, that makes the fortune of the next time I dine out. You forget, Dan, that you see a great deal of life; that such men as Lord Granard and Tom Conolly know nothing about you, perceive nothing strange, nothing odd, in these varieties of character; but they are all new and interesting to others, and every remark you make upon them has its priceless value besides."

By a great deal of flattery, and by the use of persuasion which never had the appearance of persuasion, Sir Jonah at last gained over the old fellow, and it was agreed that he should find himself in Henrietta Street at six o'clock on the following Thursday.

"By the way," said Sir Jonah, as he reached the door, "it just occurs to me, you have got some plate of mine—some of the old Barrington silver, haven't you?"

"Yes, Sir Jonah," said Dan, with a suspectful glance of the eye.

"It will look strange in celebrating a family anniversary—it is my father's birthday—if I receive my friends without my hereditary plate. I'll tell you what you can do for me, Dan: let your people take over the dishes and the other things to Henrietta Street, and, when the dinner is over, repack, and bring them back here. You have confidential fellows, haven't you?"

"Ay, Sir Jonah, I have," was the dry reply, without, however, other sign of concurrence.

"You see no objection to the arrangement, I hope?"

"Well, indeed, I don't know; I don't know what to say!"

"You say yes, or you say no, Mr. Malone," said Barrington, proudly; "but in either case I have the honour of your company."

This stroke of injured dignity did the business, and Malone at once said, "It shall be as you wish, Sir Jonah. I'll do it."

The guests had got their "cue," and from the moment that Malone appeared in the drawing-room he was met with a cordiality and a warmth that actually delighted him. Each, in turn, shook him by the hand, expressing the pleasure they had in making his acquaintance. At dinner they grew more gracious still, and, cautious and guarded as he was to keep a watch on his tongue, and say as little as he could in such com-

pany, so successful was he every time he opened his lips, and so well received was his very slightest remark, that he found himself talking away at last as freely as amongst his equals, and when, as the evening wore on, he heard the Bishop, and more still, the Earl, address him as "Malone," he knew no bound to his delight. Nor was it alone with wine he was plied; flatteries to the full as intoxicating poured in upon him from every side. His opinion was asked on questions of political importance, and his very commonplace remarks received like words of wisdom. So successfully was all this done, and so assiduously was the bottle circulated, that by eleven o'clock, when the Chief Justice had risen to propose his health, Malone heard but a very small portion of the panegyric, and quietly glided from his seat and disappeared under the table before the cheers had ceased to ring over him.

Barrington bent down to assure himself that the unconsciousness was complete, and then hastily went over and rung the bell. "How are Mr. Malone's men, Michael?"

"Very drunk, Sir Jonah," said the butler.

"Can they speak? can they see?"

"No, Sir Jonah, nor stand either! They're insensible since ten o'clock!"

"Now, then, my lords and gentlemen, let me beg you to lend us a hand to pack the plate. It's all in the next room; and we must be expeditious, for the tide serves at half-past one."

And with that the high dignitaries set to work with a will, and in less than an hour Sir Jonah was on his way to the Skerries, where a fishing-smack lay awaiting him, and with a spanking breeze he sailed, plate and all, for France, leaving Ireland never to return to it.

As for Malone, when by any accident he came to be confronted by any of the guests of that entertainment, he found himself so utterly ignored and unrecognized that he went to his grave unable to say how far his memory of the event was correct, or how far he was the dupe of his own imagination.

I heard this story more than thirty years ago, from the late John Claudius Beresford, himself an admirable type of the era of which he was one of the last survivors. He had a marvellous memory; and as he had known, more or less intimately, every public man of his time, he was a storehouse of anecdote and information on the period. Not the least humorous part of his narratives was that, while recording some trait of wild convivialism, some instance of summary law and scant justice, or some semi-barbarous usage, he could not entirely subdue the affection he bore to the period when these things were; and though not unwilling to admit that the world had grown in the interval wiser, more tolerant, and more civilized, he freely admitted that he regretted the old feudalism of the time when a gentleman enjoyed a high consideration, and when the prestige of station and fortune was sure to have its influence in the land. As he would phrase it, "All this was before the cotton-spinners; and if the world is better now, I can only say it's not so pleasant."

I suppose few of us would like to revive an age when men of high position and responsible station could lend themselves to such a fraudulent jest as this of Sir Jonah; but there was an amount of levity prevalent at the time, and a feeling which made the eccentricity of any action a full excuse for all its meanness—that absolved men from all blame, where a hearty laugh could only be secured. Let it, however, be said there was a great counterpoise to these excesses in the generous spirit that prevailed; and I have heard from the same narrator who told me this story, innumerable cases of devotedness to friendship, splendid liberality, and noble forgiveness of injury, which would go far to make one sympathize with him who admitted he was the "*laudator temporis acti*."

The hopeless task of understanding such a people, the utter impossibility of the newly-arrived English official being able to calculate the motives or weigh the impulses of men who dashed the whole business of life with personal eccentricities, and who could not in the gravest questions forego the temptation of a joke, or the opportunity of a jest, was bad enough in itself, but it led to still worse in the total misapprehension it inculcated, and in the false estimate each nation conceived of the other.

If the Irishman deemed the Englishman dull, ungenial, and depressed, the Englishman imagined the Irishman to be unstable, thoughtless, and harebrained, and even the abilities which he could not deny him he believed of little value to their possessor, when associated with a temperament devoted to pleasure and self-indulgence, and with a disposition that cared only for the present, and was recklessly indifferent for the future.

That a people who took such careless views of their own affairs, who were such spendthrifts of fortune, and so heedless of the morrow, could be firm and steadfast in their political attachments, did not appear very probable to the English Minister; and so when Mr. Pitt confided to Lord Castlereagh the charge of the measure of "the Union,"—when he gave him a *carte blanche* as to the means,—he really believed he had overcome all the difficulties of the case, and that nothing like formidable obstacle could present itself to the Bill. Let us, in our next chapter, glance at that famous debate.

The Stream that Hurries by.

AN UNPUBLISHED POEM BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE COLLEGIANS."

I.

The stream that hurries by yon fixed shore
Returns no more;
The wind that dries at morn yon dewy lawn
Breathes, and is gone;
Those wither'd flow'rs to summer's ripening glow
No more shall blow;
Those fallen leaves that strew yon garden bed
For aye are dead.

II.

Of laugh, of jest, of mirth, of pleasure past,
Nothing shall last;
On shore, on sea, on hill, on vale, on plain,
Nought shall remain;
Of all for which poor mortals vainly mourn,
Nought shall return;
Life hath his hour in heav'n and earth beneath,
And so hath Death.

III.

Not all the chains that clank in eastern clime
Can fetter Time;
For all the phials in the doctor's store
Youth comes no more;
No drug on Age's wrinkled cheek renews
Life's early hues;
Not all the tears by pious mourners shed
Can wake the dead.

IV.

For all Spring gives, and Winter takes again,
We grieve in vain;
Vainly for sunshine fled, and joys gone by,
We heave the sigh;
On, ever on, with unexhausted breath,
Time hastes to Death:
Even with each word we speak, a moment flies,
Is born, and dies.

v.

If thus, through lesser Nature's empire wide
Nothing abide,—
If wind, and wave, and leaf, and sun, and flow'r,
Have each their hour,—
He walks on ice whose dallying spirit clings
To earthly things;
And he alone is wise whose well-taught love
Is fix'd above.

vi.

Truths firm as bright, but oft to mortal ear
Chilling and drear,
Harsh as the raven's croak the sounds that tell
Of pleasure's knell;
Pray, reader, that at least the minstrel's strain
Not all be vain;
And when thou bend'st to God the suppliant knee,
Remember me!

Pallas, October 10, 1836. GERALD GRIFFIN.

Our New Bishop.

APROPOS OF THE "ŒCUMENICAL."

I.

The pretty town of Ville-Rosé, which the artistic traveller journeying between Y—— and Z—— must have seen on his way, and admired through the carriage-windows, is one of those amiable little French boroughs built at a time when men seem to have had a happier notion of the picturesque than they possess now-a-days. Imagine a sinuous street winding for the better part of a mile between two rows of gable-roofed houses, and cut in half by an ancient market-place, in which are a miniature cathedral, the remnant of an old manor-house, now transformed into a prefecture, a grey mansion which is the residence of Monseigneur the Bishop, a few shops, and an inn with a painted signboard swinging, old-fashion, over the doorway. Once upon a time Ville-Rosé was in the domain of a famous Count who was a father to his subjects, and kept a gibbet-tree in permanence, as the custom then was, on the precise spot where now stands the municipal pump. Your history of France will tell you all about the quarrels between the house of Ville-Rosé and that of Valois. In the end the Valois got the best of it, and cut off the head of a Ville-Rosé on the Place de Grève, in Paris, not far from the site on which M. Haussmann has since erected two handsome gas-lamps with a dozen branches. But the Ville-Rosés were a sturdy race, and were not to be put down for a head more or less. If you turn to the reign of Louis XIII. you will read how Gaston de Ville-Rosé fell to loggerheads with Richelieu, and how the Cardinal besieged the town, and how, all the provisions being exhausted, save one pair of boots belonging to the Count, that magnanimous nobleman ordered that they should be divided equally amongst his troops, only reserving to himself the heel of the left foot, which he ate, and then perished rather than give in. All these things are remembered in Ville-Rosé to this day, and the beadle at the cathedral still shows to the passing stranger the magnificent tomb of the Count Gaston, which was once covered with silver, before it was stripped by lawless *sans-culottes* in 1793. At present Ville-Rosé is a peaceful town, well disposed towards everybody, and more particularly towards the reigning dynasty. On the façade of the prefecture—where once was carved the escutcheon of the Ville-Rosés; and after that (from 1792 to 1804) the bonnet of liberty; and after that, again, the Imperial eagle; and after that the fleur-de-lys of the Bourbons; and after that (Ludovico Philippo regnante) the Gallic cock; and after that (Consule Rollino, when M. Ledru Rollin was Home Minister) the Republican triangle—now shines once more

a Napoleonic eagle; though certain evil tongues pretend that this eagle is no more than part of the old cock that made pretend to crow there from 1830 to 1848, the sculptor having merely strengthened the legs a bit and added a little more beak to the head. For my part, I should have been inclined to treat this assertion as a calumny, but I cannot quite forget that the inn in the market-place, already spoken of, was once called *l'Hôtel du Roi*, and had the three golden lilies of France upon its sign-board. Since '52, however, it has changed its name to *Hôtel de l'Empereur*, and the lilies on the board have made way for the Imperial bees. Many people have forgotten this change, for in these times events succeed each other so fast that it is not everybody that has leisure to remember trifles; but *I* have not forgotten it, neither am I likely to forget it until Maître Claude, the host, has his signboard entirely fresh painted. For in '52 the worthy man, when he rechristened his establishment (I believe at the peremptory request of Monsieur de Fustige, the Prefect), simply directed the artist to modify the lilies so as to give them the look of bees; and the artist did so, leaving, however, the royal *field azure*, whereas everybody knows that the arms of his Imperial Majesty are five bees (not three) laid out flat * upon a *field sinople*. Perhaps though, now I come to ponder upon it, Maître Claude may not have acted thus altogether without design, for Ville-Rosé was one of those towns that were firmly persuaded in the beginning that the Empire would never last; and Maître Claude may have thought it a sin to throw away money upon bees when at any moment the lilies might be called into service again. In those days Ville-Rosé was possessed of a bishop who held firmly by the lilies and all who sported them. This holy man had been raised to the episcopacy by Charles X., and he could never be brought to look upon Louis Philippe as otherwise than a usurper. So long as his Orleanist Majesty's reign lasted, Monseigneur kept on terms of cool civility with the authorities, treating the Prefect to an occasional dinner indeed, but doing so rather as an act of courtesy towards the man than as a token of deference towards the functionary. At dessert it was Monseigneur's invariable practice to fill his glass to the brim with old Bordeaux, and to say to his guest:—"Excuse me, Monsieur le Préfet, but it is a custom of mine always to drink to the health of my sovereign," and the two gentlemen would thereupon raise their glasses together, crying out: "The King!" —with this difference, however, that the prelate's toast was intended for H. R. H. the Count of Chambord, whilst that of the Prefect—though it ought by rights to have been drunk for the reigning monarch—was not probably intended for anybody. With sentiments so royalist it is easy to conceive what must have been Monseigneur's indignation upon hearing that the Empire had been proclaimed. To the Republic he had submitted cheerfully: in the first place, because resistance would have been of no

* *Laid out flat* is not the correct heraldic term. I fancy the real expression is *displayed*. Unfortunately, we French have no Garter King to set us right in these little matters.

use; and in the second, because he hoped, that by dint of the vagaries in which they were indulging, the Republicans would soon pave the way to a Royalist restoration. This explains how it was that he went to bless a Tree of Liberty in great state, and condescended, with his own white episcopal hands, to stroke the head of an unkempt citizen who was bawling: "Vive la Guillotine!" I do not say the excellent pastor's conscience did not remind him, by an occasional twinge, that this was a somewhat Machiavellic sort of proceeding; but, then, he consoled himself by reflecting that it was all for the good of the Church, and I have heard he did double penance to square his accounts with Heaven. On the day, however, when he found that all his pet hopes had been frustrated by the election of a new usurper, Monseigneur's patience abruptly gave way, and he vowed with solemn emphasis that if ever he was caught bowing to an Imperial functionary he would forfeit his share of future bliss. Somehow these words got abroad—as ill-timed words always do, by the way—and it having been reported that Monseigneur was going to officiate in the cathedral on the very Sunday following the election, the whole of Ville-Rosé turned out to note how he would demean himself at the critical prayer: "*Domine, salvum fac Imperatorem nostrum Napoleonem.*" Faithful, stout-hearted old prelate! I still see him on the altar-steps as he stood that morning amidst a profound hush, and with every eye in the cathedral fixed on him. "*Domine, salvum,*" he began in a clear tone, and got as far as the word *fac;* but here he was seized with a fit of coughing, the organ opportunely pealed in, and when next his voice was heard it was saying calmly, "*in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.*" Shall I add that when Monseigneur returned home after the service his face was beaming with unusual good-humour, and that from that day forth it was noticed in Ville-Rosé that on every subsequent occasion when he officiated, Monseigneur always coughed at that word *fac*, which made the dean and chapter smile, the choristers titter, and the Prefect bite his moustache with uncommon fierceness.

If I have thus dilated upon some of the peculiarities that distinguished our worthy Bishop, it is partly for the sake of observing how much we have changed in Ville-Rosé since 1852, and partly, because talking of the good prelate leads me direct to the subject of the present narrative, which is the recent election of a new bishop in our ancient borough. Had you, madam or sir, come to visit Ville-Rosé some few weeks ago, you would have found us all in a state of strange perturbation. Our streets,—habitually so quiet that the fighting of two dogs in the roadway is enough to bring the entire population to their windows,—our streets, I say, were for once as excited as they had been on that famous occasion already spoken of, when we planted a Tree of Liberty in the middle of the market-place, and swore to water it with our blood rather than suffer it to die. But this time the emotion was of another sort; there was no blood in it, nor yet swearing. It was simply this, that the *Journal Officiel* had arrived that morning with the news that Monseigneur l'Eveque de Ville-Rose was about to be raised to an archbishopric, and to the

Senate, and that the Imperial Government was going to recommend him to the Court of Rome for one of the vacant cardinals' hats.

The Bishop, upon whom so much honour was to be conferred, was not, of course, the same who was addicted to coughing. That kindly but unbending prelate died within a year or two of his present Majesty's accession, stanch to the end, and murmuring, in the last mass he ever said, the same words he used to whisper at the cathedral when his fits of coughing oppressed him: "*Domine, salvum fac Regem nostrum Henricum Quintum.*" No; the prelate, for whom the crowned mitre, the senatorial beret, and the scarlet hat were destined, was a bishop of very different mould. He was the next successor but one to Monseigneur who coughed. Tall, hawk-eyed, stern-faced, and imperious, he was just such a priest as we can fancy Richelieu. Every one of his grades in the church had been earned by some vigorous pamphlet or startling sermon. There was no question about his being of the church militant. He knew Hebrew, he could talk Greek, he was versed in Coptic, and he wrote his pastoral letters in a Latin so pure, that it was the envy of the whole College of Cardinals. The rise of Monseigneur Fulmine had been astonishingly rapid; so rapid, indeed, that were it possible for priests to be tormented by the secular feeling of jealousy, nine-tenths of Monseigneur's colleagues must have detested him cordially, and wished him Bishop of Je——. Reader, I forget the name of that town of the Jebusites that was once besieged with trumpets.

But the rise of Monseigneur Fulmine was not the result of mere scholarship. The fact of his being well up in Coptic might have been a potent recommendation for him to the Academy of Cairo; but I doubt whether it would have helped him much with the Emperor. If Monseigneur had scaled the ladder so fast, it was because he had gone the right way to work. He had cast in his lot with the Imperial Government. He had written a volume, in which he had buffeted the Legitimists, smitten the Orleanists on the cheek, and given a formidable kick to the Republicans. He had sown bitterness and dismay at the Vatican, by starting the question of the Gallican rights at a moment when Cardinal Antonelli was growing a little bumptious; and had brought down upon him in arms both Monseigneur Dupanloup, M. Louis Veuillot, and the Count de Montalembert, by the terrific declaration that in France the Pope stood only second, and that the head of the French Church was the Emperor. But this was not all: for Monseigneur Pie, Bishop of Poictiers, having lifted up his head at this impious sentiment, Monseigneur Fulmine had gone out with book and pen, and valiantly waged war against that prelate, causing him to retreat behind his outworks, and utter piercing cries, in which he was joined by *L'Univers*, *Le Monde*, *L'Union*, and *La Gazette de France*: who, for the moment, forgot their differences, and wondered in lamentable chorus what the world was coming to. Finally, at the three political elections that had taken place, whilst he was at Ville-Rosé, Monseigneur had thrown the whole weight of his influence in the scale of the official candidates, thereby procuring for our fortunate town the honour

of being represented,—firstly, by a General of Infantry, aged 72; secondly, by a General of Cavalry, aged 73; and thirdly, by a General of Artillery, aged 74, and deaf; the last of whom is, I believe, legislating for our behoof at the moment of penning these lines. Such important services as these could not be ignored, and the promotion to the Senate and the Archiepiscopate was but the just reward of them. There were, even, many who marvelled why it was that Monseigneur had not been promoted before; how it came that he had been left nine years at Ville-Rosé. But the Imperial Government knows what it is about. It has been taken in so often by eloquent prelates, who waxed warm in the good cause so long as there were dignities to obtain, and waxed cool in the same when there was nothing more to win, that it has grown to be wary of lavishing its good things too soon. To hold Monseigneur in patience, and to keep his zeal burning, there was now and then a rise of a step in the Legion of Honour: one year came the ribbon; after that the rosette; and then subsequently the collar. There were honorary favours, too, such as a chaplaincy at Court, invitations to Compiègne, and an autograph letter from his Majesty, accompanying a present of the *Life of Cæsar*, bound in purple, and printed on vellum-post, with gilt edges. But the last honours of all were prudently deferred until Monseigneur had gone so far in his imperialism that he could never by any possibility retract. This final leap he took, by one morning publishing a pamphlet, in which, disdaining to mince matters, he candidly stated that the reign of the Bonaparte dynasty had been prophesied in Isaiah, and that revolution and sacrilege, republicanism and blasphemy, were four synonymous terms. After this, there being no further cause for fear, the Government had doubtless reflected that to delay promotion any longer would only serve to damp the spirits of Monseigneur; and, thereupon, had appeared in the *Journal Officiel* that momentous paragraph which created such excitement at Ville-Rosé.

I should be advancing too much were I to say that Monseigneur Fulmine was very popular amongst us. Popular, in fact, is hardly the word to apply to such a thunder-wielding celebrity. You had only to glance at our bishop to see that between him and the people there could exist but little sympathy, and that little of a very cool, condescending sort. Whether he rode through the streets in his handsome brougham, or walked in state up the nave of his cathedral, preceded by the silent vergers and followed by his awe-struck chaplains, or whether he looked down upon the whole congregation from under the crimson canopy of his throne, there was always the same expression of haughty calm on his face, an expression that kept familiarity at arms'-length and forced the most stubborn necks to bow. In some towns the prefect and the bishop are friends on equal terms, and in others I have known the bishop defer with humility to the prefect; but it was not so at Ville-Rosé. In our diocese, M. de Fustige, great and terrible as he was in his bearing towards us small fry, was the very obedient servant of Monseigneur. Not for worlds would he have disagreed with him, or addressed him otherwise

than bareheaded, or ventured to laugh in his presence. Monseigneur knew it, and treated M. de Fustige with the same grave consideration which a well-bred man shows to his butler. As for the Mayor, the General of Division, the President of the Tribunal, and the Procureur-Impérial, the mere name of Monseigneur was enough to set them all bending their backs together, as if they had been pulled by a string; and I am persuaded that nothing on earth could have induced any one of them to cross the threshold of his lordship without first putting on a dress-coat, a white cravat, and a new pair of gloves. This will give you an idea of the esteem in which Monseigneur was held in his diocese; for I would have you remark, that neither the General of the Division nor the Procureur-Impérial was over-famous for humility, and it was both a novel sight and a wondrous to behold them in the company of his lordship so extremely abashed and respectful. Three or four times in the course of the year, Monseigneur used to issue cards for a state dinner, and once a week, on Tuesday evenings, he held a levee. On these latter occasions the drawing-rooms were crammed to suffocation; all the people of note within a radius of ten miles were in the habit of attending; and if the attitude of such mighty personages as the Prefect, the General, and the Procureur was humble, I leave you to judge how reverential was the deportment of the lowlier guests. The hour of the levees was eight, but twenty minutes before that time the town was always astir to see the carriages pass. The tradesmen stood on their doorsteps reading the morning's paper from Paris; their wives sat at the open window, if the season was fine, or clung cosily to their husbands' arms if it was cold and wintry. At the principal café the tables were moved on to the pavement outside, so that the customers should lose nothing of the inspiring sight; and at the street-corners, no matter what the weather was, small boys and small girls congregated in groups, with here and there a red-breeched soldier, his hands dug deep in his trousers' pockets, and a paper cigarette in his mouth. Punctually as the old clock in the cathedral tower chimed musically the three-quarters past seven, the rolling of wheels would begin; and, simultaneously, marching four-and-four, with the drum-major at its head, the regimental band of the battalion in garrison would debouch on to the market-place. This attendance of the band to play Beethoven and Mendelssohn under Monseigneur's windows was a civility on the part of the Colonel, M. le Vicomte de la Pomponette, a brilliant officer, who, like our Bishop, had made his way very rapidly in the world, and was, consequently, viewed with favour by his lordship. In the train of the musicians followed, as a matter of course, all the tagrag and bobtail of the town, escorted in their turn by all the available policemen. Five minutes were spent in forming the tagrag into a semi-circle three deep, and keeping them out of the way of the carriages; and then, for the next hour, vehicle after vehicle, of every age and shape, size and build, would defile in a motley unbroken procession. First to arrive was generally M. de Fustige, in a sober-looking, official brougham with two horses. As the distance between the Prefect's door and Monseigneur's

was only ten yards, it may perhaps occur to some carping minds that M. de Fustige might just as well have walked; but I take leave to remind such critics, that if a Prefect were to go to an episcopal levee on foot as if he were an ordinary mortal, there would soon be an end to all authority. Next after the Prefect (very imposing, by the way, with the scarlet ribbon of "Commander" round his throat), the General and his wife, the Mayor and Mayoress, M. le Président and Madame la Présidente, the first couple in a respectable clarence, the other two in no less respectable flys. After that a rumbling noise in the distance, a thrill amongst the crowd, and a stately family-coach drives up, bearing Monsieur le Marquis de Ville-Rosé (descendant of the celebrated Gaston who devoured part of his boots), Madame la Marquise, Monsieur le Comte their son, and Mdlle. Hermine de Ville-Rosé. The arrival of this conveyance always creates a profound sensation. The coach is emblazoned with arms and coronets on every foot of panel; it has a hammer-cloth, four large silver-gilt lamps, one footman behind and a towering *chasseur*, who looks so magnificent with his cocked-hat and plumes that the crowd once cheered him under the impression that it was he who was the Marquis. Observe, I pray, the difference between this majestuous equipage and that which follows it, for here we have the old régime and the new. The next comers are marquises too: M. le Marquis and Madame la Marquise de la Roche-Courbette. They rattle up in a showy new brougham from Paris, with the prancing clatter of two splendid bays. Monsieur is one of the deputies of the department, and wears a whole constellation of foreign orders on his coat; Madame is one of the beauties of the Chaussee d'Antin: her hair is ablaze with diamonds; and her dress of *crêpe de chine* will be charged 3,000 francs by Mr. Worth. And yet see how small M. de la Courbette looks when he meets his brother marquis in Monseigneur's drawing-room. Madame de la Courbette would give half her diamonds if Madame de Ville-Rosé would only ask her to dinner and call her "ma chère;" and M. de la Courbette would cheerfully renew the feat of Gaston de Ville-Rosé and eat part of his boots, if only the proud old Marquis would shake him by the hand and *tutoyer* him. But no such luck. The elder Marquis bows to the younger with such a refinement of courtesy, and lays so much stress upon the title of Marquis with which he addresses him, that M. de la Courbette cannot but feel the irony of the salutation, and tries all in vain to appear at his ease. What makes it more provoking, too, is that there are some shabby-looking people in the room with whom the Ville-Rosés seem to be on terms of cordial familiarity, shaking hands, laughing and joking with them as with intimate friends. These people have no diamonds, however, nor yet dresses from Worth's, nor yet three-hundred-guinea broughams. Those three old ladies, now talking to the Marchioness, were borne up to the door each in a sedan-chair, to the mute stupefaction of a Parisian who happened to be looking out of the window of the "Hôtel de l'Empereur," and had never seen such vehicles before. That ill-dressed little man, now offering a pinch of snuff to the Marquis, came in a pair of galoshes, which

he has left below in the cloak-room; and that other little man, paying compliments to Mdlle. Hermine de Ville-Rosé, rode in from his country place upon a rough cob, which will carry him back home to-night a good seven miles' ride, to save cab-hire. But, poverty notwithstanding, these ladies and gentlemen are of the true blue blood, which the Ville-Roses love. There is no question about their parchments; they can show their sixteen, thirty-two, and sixty-four quarterings, which M. de la Roche-Courbette cannot. They are Legitimists, moreover, who have been sulking nobly and consistently for the last nine-and-thirty years, refusing to acknowledge any sovereign since Charles X. Their talk is of the Pontifical Zouaves, Monseigneur Dupanloup, and the last consistory. They keep up in a corner snugly to themselves, carefully shutting out the profane; and if they attend the levees of Monseigneur Fulmine—whom they consider as bad as a heretic and despise accordingly—it is simply to show their respect for the Church which the prelate represents, and to set a wholesome example to their inferiors.

Of course Monseigneur is aware of this. He sees the tacit disapprobation implied in the ceremonious bows to which his noble guests treat him. He has noted (and so have his chaplains, and so has the Prefect, and so has everybody, for that matter) that the Marquis, though he attends the levees, refuses the invitations to dinner, and that neither M. de Ville-Rosé, nor any of his Legitimist friends, ever condescend to touch the refreshments which Monseigneur's footmen hand round on massive silver trays. But after all, what does his lordship care? It will be quite time enough to think of propitiating the Legitimists when he has become a Cardinal, like Monseigneur Donnet and Monseigneur Bonnechose; and, meanwhile, he has adoration in plenty from all those Imperial functionaries, noblemen, and noblewomen who form a glittering circle around him and bring to his feet the finest homage that an ambitious man can wish, that of wealth and power. Verily, now that I look back upon those episcopal levees, so unlike what Ville-Rosé had ever seen before, and so unlike—if I may judge by the modest tenour of our present Bishop's mind—what it will for a long while see again, I am struck by the animation which a single man of parts is able to throw into an obscure provincial town. When again shall we see the regimental band playing Beethoven every Tuesday evening under the Bishop's windows, whilst a crowd of three or four hundred people in silks and jewels, white gloves and white ties, thread their way through sumptuously furnished apartments to a reception-room as grand as a Minister's? When again shall we have a Bishop who will be able to collect, out of such a hopeless town and department as ours, a court that would have rivalled that of the Archbishop of Lyons or the Archbishop of Bordeaux? As I write I have the photograph of Monseigneur before me, and I find it difficult to realize that my fellow-citizens and I have seen the last of him. My calendar tells me that it is Tuesday, my watch points to eight, and it seems to me that, in a few minutes, I shall hear M. de la Pomponette's band strike up the famous Sonata in G. "Baptiste,

have you laid out my evening clothes and opera-hat? have the carriages begun to drive up yet? have you ordered me a fly at the 'Hôtel de l'Empereur?'" But Baptiste only stares. He remembers, as I do, that autumn evening when Monseigneur held his last levee, three short days only after his promotion to the Archbishopric. Monseigneur must have been in a grievous hurry to be gone, that he could not wait so much as a week to allow us time to subscribe for a suitable testimonial. As it was, we had to make shift with an address engrossed on parchment at four-and-twenty hours' notice, which the Prefect presented "in the name of the whole diocese," speaking in a broken voice and with his official coat on. What a crowd there was that night. How we pushed and elbowed to get a sight of Monseigneur—to watch how he bore his fresh-blooming honours. What a death-like silence there was when he stood up to speak, and how we panted with emotion when he declared "that the one hope of his life had been to live and die amongst us, that our welfare and our spiritual interests had been his sole care, and that the proudest day of his life would also be the saddest, since it took him away from Ville-Rosé." It is only great and clever men, such as Monseigneur, who have the knack of saying these things so as to make men feel moved and women burst into tears. I looked over at the old Marquis de Ville-Rosé and fancied his lip quivered; Madame la Marquise was crying; and that evening, for the first time, the Legitimists dipped their lips in his lordship's wine, and went one by one to shake hands with him.

Next morning, whilst the memory of his pathetic farewell still lingered kindly in our thoughts, Monseigneur was off by the six-o'clock express. It was a sad day. The beadle at the cathedral put a crape round his hat, the *Journal de Ville-Rosé* appeared with a black border, the Dean and Chapter looked sorrowful, the shopkeepers remarked that it would be a bad thing for trade, and I myself, when I sat down to record on paper my impressions of the event, found my pen instinctively tracing the word Ichabod—which meant that our glory had departed.

II.

Sometimes it happens that whilst the Bishop promoted goes out through one gate of the city, his successor makes a triumphal entry through another. In these cases the line of conduct to be pursued is evident and simple. The inhabitants have only to act as the loyal people of Paris do when there is a change of dynasty: that is, leave the outgoing power to take care of itself, and hurry off without loss of time to cheer the new. Now, seeing that we were an acute population at Ville-Rosé, notwithstanding our smallness, it is just possible that we might have behaved in this way towards Monseigneur Fulmine had a successor to that admirable prelate been appointed immediately. But the successor was not appointed; and so, during ten whole days or thereabouts, we groaned and whimpered to our hearts' content, having nothing else to do. One morning, however, it occurred to somebody that there had been enough of whimpering. "To moan ten full days," remarked this philosophical person, "is contrary to the

spirit of nature ;" and forthwith, with a view to enlivening us, he started the query as to who would succeed to the heritage of Monseigneur? This was like throwing a bone amongst melancholy dogs; the whining ceased as by magic, and we all flew on to the bone. The first to perceive that a sudden revulsion of feeling had taken place were the photographers of the town, who had lately been selling portraits of Monseigneur Fulmine by the gross; the next to make the discovery were the booksellers, who had been driving a brisk trade in the pamphlets and sermons of his lordship. Abruptly, the sale both of photographs and pamphlets stopped; and, by a logical coincidence, the subscriptions which had been pouring into the hands of the Mayor for the purchasing of a testimonial to our late Bishop came to a dead stand-still. Of course; and this was just as it should be. Monotonous emotions are not good for man; the human mind has need of variety. Ask any Frenchman whom it was he embraced yesterday: he will tell you, Peter. Inquire of him whom he purposes to embrace to-morrow: he will answer, Paul. Monseigneur Fulmine only shared the common lot. He had had his day, been presented with an address, and mourned for; what more could he want? Had he any right to expect that we should be miserable about him eternally? Certainly not. Were we not by every means justified in forgetting him completely now that his back was turned? Unquestionably. . . .

As a rule the selection of a new bishop does not cause much excitement in France; and this for the simple reason that nine Frenchmen out of ten scarcely know what a bishop is, or, at most, have but a hazy notion of his duties. In certain prefectures, of the second or third class, one often sees Madame la Préfète perplexed with doubts as to whether it is Monseigneur or Monsieur le Général who is entitled to precedence; and this knotty point has generally to be settled by prompt action on the part of Monseigneur, who, as soon as dinner is announced, darts forward and offers Madame his arm before his competitor has had time to forestall him. Of course, in higher prefectures, Madame knows perfectly that a bishop defers only to a duke, a senator, or a minister, and that a cardinal-archbishop yields the *pas* to nobody. But that there should be any hesitation on these points, even in the mind of a newly-married little hostess of a third-class prefecture, is a sufficient indication of the irreligious spirit of this unbelieving age, which has so reduced bishops from their ancient state, and so miserably curtailed their salaries. Speaking for myself, as a solitary citizen, I think we might with advantage pay more attention, in France, to affairs ecclesiastical than we are wont to do. It is true our unhallowed Revolution of 1789 has deprived bishops of the right to fine, flog, and hang, which they exercised a hundred years ago with infinite zeal to the greater glory of the church; and it is true, moreover, that the same Revolution has impiously ordained that they should pay taxes like other folk. Nevertheless, and despite these sacrilegious encroachments, a French bishop still wields a great deal more power than, say, an English prelate. All the livings of a diocese are in his gift. He has complete authority over the convents and monasteries, a right of control over the

scholastic establishments conducted by priests; and, as though this were not enough, he is at liberty to give as well as take away, for he can promote, translate, degrade or dismiss, his clergy as he thinks fit. Under the circumstances, if we were to pay a little more attention than we are wont to do to ecclesiastical appointments, I think it would scarcely be amiss.

At Ville-Rosé, previously to the time of Monseigneur Fulmine, it had always been a matter of the profoundest indifference to us as to who our bishops were. We confidently accepted our prelates on trust, such as Providence, the Pope and the Government sent them; and if we detected that a new bishop was taller or shorter, fatter or thinner, than his predecessor, we confined ourselves to making a note of the fact without drawing any invidious conclusions therefrom. On the occasion of Monseigneur Fulmine's departure, however, it was altogether another matter; and for once we began seriously and anxiously to discuss who was likely to be his successor. The fact is, Bishop Fulmine had been such a brilliant light that he had thrown, as it were, a halo of glory over our well-beloved borough. We people of Ville-Rosé had got into the habit of hearing the world talk about us. When we journeyed to other cities we found ourselves objects of envy and curiosity in the eyes of the inhabitants. Men said to us: "Ah! you come from Ville-Rosé. That's a famous bishop you've got there!" Women eyed us with interest and exclaimed: "He is very good-looking, isn't he? They say he has such a sweet voice! Have you ever dined with him, Monsieur?" Furthermore, in the summer months, on Whit-Sunday and Ascension Day for instance, when it was known that Monseigneur would preach, the trains used to bring us down crowds of visitors, whose coming inflated our vanity and rejoiced our tradesmen. After basking for nine years in the rays of such an episcopal planet, it was only natural that we should dread relapsing again into darkness. What if our new bishop should be eighty years old and toothless? What if he should stammer? What if he should be some poor, ignorant old *curé*, only promoted on account of his Bonapartist zeal, and addicted to talking dog-Latin? These were horrid thoughts. A local journalist filled us with dismay by stating his personal experiences of a bishop who ate pease with a knife and picked the drumstick of a fowl with his fingers.

The worst of it, too, was that we knew of no available priest, glorious in his works and discreet in his manners, on whose behalf we might petition our Prefect to exert himself. I do not believe there is such a thing as a clergy-list in France,—at least I have never seen one,—but we had a bootmaker in the town who was a very good substitute. He had been a sacristan once, and knew the names of all the remarkable priests on his fingers' ends. Him we accordingly sought out in his back-shop and consulted as to our prospects. But he could give us no hope. After a patient calculation, which he performed with a piece of chalk on the sole of a slipper, he declared that there were nineteen priests of talent unprovided with bishoprics; only that sixteen of them were Legitimists, and

that of the remaining three who leaned towards the Imperial dynasty, the first was too old, the second too young, and the third not quite in his right mind. "This last one," he explained, "would have done very well for you, for he was uncommonly eloquent in the pulpit. But it seems he has been writing three volumes to prove that the only person infallible here below is the Emperor, and the effort has rather unsettled him."

He was a truthful bootmaker who said this. We knew he was incapable of deceiving us; and so went away discouraged after his announcement, reflecting that evil times had lighted on our borough. That evening, as it happened, there was a small party at the Château de la Roche-Courbette, some three or four miles out of Ville-Rosé. Monsieur le Marquis had invited a few of the local dignitaries; and, in the drawing-room, whilst the tea was being handed round, Madame la Marquise started the subject of the vacant bishopric, apostrophizing me as to my consultation with the bootmaker:

"You gentlemen have been trying to find us a candidate, have you not, Monsieur Gustave?"

"Yes, Madame la Marquise, but without success."

"What a pity! We could have got up such a pretty petition to the Government. We might have had it written on toned paper and tied with blue favours. The Marquis and the Prefect would have presented it to the Minister of Justice, and everybody here would have signed it."

"Signed what, my dear?" asks the Marquis.

"Why, a petition in favour of a new bishop such as Monseigneur. Madame la Générale, Madame la Préfète, these gentlemen and I want to find a bishop who will be as much like the last one as possible."

At this I notice that the Prefect winces. He has not forgotten the immense amount of humble pie he consumed under Monseigneur's reign, and the prospect of continuing the same diet under his successor is not particularly tantalizing. The General, who also ate humble pie, gives a kind of snort and bursts out frankly:

"Egad, Madame, I hope our new bishop will be made of softer wood than the other."

"To be sure he was terribly haughty," says the Marchioness, laughing.

"And arrogant," bursts in Madame de Fustige.

"And cross-tempered," remarks Madame la Générale; and upon this the tongues being loosed, we devote ten minutes to the unrestrained pleasure of picking our late idol to bits. The Prefect, as becomes his position, abstains from the sport. The Mayor, less versed in diplomacy, joins in it naïvely. The General, who is too good a soldier to like cackling, sips his tea in silence, but mutters once between his teeth: "Confound the fellow, he used to handle us as if we were ninepins."

"I am certain he must have had a glass eye!" exclaims the Marchioness, "he used to stare so coldly."

"And do you know I believe he dyed his hair?" rejoins Madame la Préfète; "that lustrous black was not natural."

"Tush, my dear," intercedes the Prefect, enjoyably, "this is going too far."

"I don't think so at all," laughs Madame la Générale. "When we poor women dye, you gentlemen proclaim it fast enough."

"Yes, but I don't think Monseigneur did dye his hair," responds the Prefect.

"He had scarcely any to dye," observes the Mayor, simply: "he always wore a skull-cap."

"Monsieur Jules Sifflot, you don't join in the debate," exclaims the Marchioness, rapping her fan on the table near her. "Is Monseigneur guilty or not guilty, did he dye or did he not?"

M. Jules Sifflot is editor of the *Journal de Ville-Rosé*, which went into mourning on the day of Monseigneur's departure.

"Madame," he answers, coolly, "I never was close enough to his lordship to judge. Being but a humble journalist, Monseigneur never allowed me to come within twenty yards of him."

"And yet what a touching article you wrote on the day he left! You said you felt as if you had lost a second father."

"So I did, Madame. My father used to pull my ears, and tell me I should come to no good. Monseigneur used to make the same observation; and if he never pulled my ears, I am sure it was not for want of the wishing."

Everybody laughs. Monsieur Sifflot is one of those gentlemen who can never be taken at a disadvantage.

"A thought has just occurred to me," remarks the Marquise, after a moment's pause. "Monseigneur's departure is a more serious matter than we fancy. Had he stayed he would have represented this diocese at the Œcumenical Council. As it is, we shall not be represented."

"That's obvious," observes M. Sifflot. "No bishop, no representative."

"Dear me, I had forgotten the Council," says Madame la Préfète, with something like consternation in her voice. "What a calamity this is! I almost wish Monseigneur were back again."

"The more so as, if he were back again, he would soon be off for Rome," rejoins the Mayor, amused at his own wit.

"I should have been glad to see Ville-Rosé represented," murmurs the Marchioness. "Monseigneur Fulmine would certainly have done us honour. He will make more noise at the Council than even Monseigneur Dupanloup or Monseigneur Plantier, and by-and-by there would have been a mention of the Bishop of Ville-Rosé in all the history-books. We might, then, have had a statue to him in the market-place, and a column commemorative of the Council in one of the aisles of the cathedral. Dear, dear! how provoking this is. Why couldn't the Government have waited till next year before taking him away?"

"Monseigneur seems to have risen in value again during the last five minutes," remarks M. Sifflot, phlegmatically. "I fancy we are beginning to forget his glass eye and his stained locks."

"I never said his eye was glass," replies the Marquise, impetuously. "I only said it looked like it."

"And I am sure I don't know that his hair was dyed," adds Madame la Préfète, relenting. "It may be only a mistake of mine."

"Come, come," growls the General, "the Bishop was very well as he was just now; I don't see any use in putting him together again. He's gone, and won't come back, that's the long and short of it—so let's talk of somebody else."

The Marquis nods approvingly. "Bravo, General! Let's try between us and find Monseigneur a successor. If we let my wife talk, she will soon be for writing a letter to ask his lordship to return, and she will cajole you and me into signing it. I see her intention in her eyes. She is already thinking of the toned paper and blue ribbons."

"Well," smiles the Marquise, "wouldn't that be better than letting the Council go by, and this poor diocese remain without a representative?"

"But who told you we should be without a representative? There's plenty of time to have a fresh bishop, and to send him to Rome in his new clothes."

"Yes; but it won't be the same thing. If we have a new bishop he won't be a man of talent. The bootmaker told M. Gustave so."

"Who is the bootmaker?" inquires the Marquis.

I explained to M. de la Roche-Courbette the peculiar idiosyncrasy of the artist in question, who made boots, and acted in his hours of leisure as an ecclesiastical dictionary. The Marquis listened, and shrugged his shoulders.

"You've been going on a wrong tack, mon cher. We none of us want a bishop-man-of-talent; at least I speak for myself, and I believe the Prefect and the General agree with me."

The two functionaries nod, and so does the Mayor, though not appealed to.

"What we want," continues the Marquis, "is a bishop who will do what we wish him. A good-tempered priest, five-and-fifty or thereabouts, well taught, not ambitious——"

"No striker," breaks in M. Sifflot.

"What do you mean?" asks the Marquis.

"It's in St. Paul," responds the editor, "and I suppose it means a bishop who won't deal his colleagues hard blows on the head when warring with them about the infallibility of the Pope."

"But you would give us a bishop without any soul or life in him," protests the Marquise.

"Not at all," answers the Marquis. "We should have him civil and well dressed. His cassock should be of as fine cloth as Monseigneur Fulmine's, his gold cross as handsome, and his cambric bands as white. He would preach good sermons, not too long or too short. He would give cosy levees once a week, and he would go to the Œcumenical Council

and make a smart speech or two, so as to get the name of Ville-Rosé into the history-books. Do you accept my picture?"

"Yes, we accept on those terms," exclaim the ladies together; "but where are you going to find this paragon?"

"I don't think there will be much difficulty about finding him," says the Marquis. "He is not a paragon, he is only a very ordinary type of priest. There must be several in this very diocese."

"Have you already set your eye on one?" asks the Prefect, with just the slightest shade of uneasiness in his tone.

"No, Monsieur le Préfet, but this is what I propose. Let us here, this evening, go over the list of the priests in the diocese, and if we can agree together about a likely candidate, we will draw up a petition and start off with it to Paris. Your interest and mine, and that of my brother deputy, will be enough to recommend him."

"Humph! that's not so sure. But we can try; the stake is worth the game."

"Very well, let us clear the table, and fetch pen and ink. One of the ladies shall preside; M. Jules Sifflot will no doubt act as secretary; and we will vote, as at the Palais Bourbon, by Ay and Nay. Let us see. How many of us are there? Three ladies; yourself, Monsieur le Préfet; the General, our Mayor, M. Sifflot, M. Gustave, and I—that makes nine."

"*Numero Deus impari gaudet*," mutters Jules Sifflot.

"Is my motion approved?" asks the Marquis.

"Yes," cry the three ladies, laughing and taking off their gloves. "Yes," echo the General and the Mayor. "Yes," nods the Prefect. And so, being all of one mind, we sat down in a circle round the table.

III.

I will pass over the preliminaries of our memorable debate: the unanimous election of our hostess to fill the chair, and the first hour and a half of the actual proceedings: for none of these points offer any vital interest. We had drawn up a list of all the priests of the diocese, and our method of winnowing the candidates was this: Madame la Marquise held the list in her hand and called out the names one by one. If we approved we were to say "Ay," if we disapproved "No." When it was doubtful, we debated on the subject; and if anybody chose to ask for a ballot, we voted by dropping napoleons and francs into a hat—the gold coins signifying Yes, and the silver ones No. It seems we must have had a sorry collection of ecclesiastics in our diocese, for we disposed of sixty-four candidates in half that number of minutes. After that there was a ten-minutes' discussion over a priest who wrote books and played the violoncello. He was a worthy man, but I think his musical instrument proved detrimental to him. At the ballot he was gratified with eight francs and only one napoleon. Next, there was a fierce debate over the Archdeacon, who was strongly supported by the General on the ground that he played whist better than any other man in the department. The Prefect ventured to hint that this was scarcely a qualification; and the

question being put to the vote, was decided against his reverence by six voices to three. There was some pretty skirmishing over the names of three minor canons and two fervid vicars, but in each case the ballot proved unpropitious; neither was any success achieved by a curate who devoted his leisure to the rearing of turnips. A hot strife was, however, waged during a whole half-hour over the name of a young precentor aged twenty-six, who had a voice as sweet as a barrel-organ. This gentleman was accepted on the spot by the three ladies, who were for having him consecrated without further delay. In vain was it urged by the combined logic of Prefect and Mayor, to say nothing of the General, that the gifted candidate was a great deal too young; that he must wait at least twenty years or so. This proposition was indignantly scouted; the President exercised her authority to enforce a general silence, and then made a speech which lasted a quarter of an hour. There was a reply from the Prefect, and then a counter-reply from Madame la Générale; a ballot was demanded, and, amidst a deep silence, it was proclaimed that the young precentor had missed his chance by just a single vote. After this came an episode which caused some little shame and confusion. Madame read out the name of one Abbé Bonneau, famed for his good works; and instantly there was a chorus of praise from every mouth round the table. The Abbé was an angel in disguise, a saint, a modern Chrysostom. Never since the early Christian days had such a man been seen. Half his salary was given to the poor; if he had a loaf he shared it, if he had a coat he lent it, if he had a penny-piece in his purse he cheerfully gave it away. The anecdotes we knew of this good man's charity were so many, and the volubility with which we delivered them was so great, that the President was obliged at last to strike her fan on the table, and to request us to speak each in our turn. This we did, waxing eloquent with our theme, and declaring, every one of us with touching earnestness, that it was a sin and a disgrace that the Government did not more often choose such excellent men as this Abbé Bonneau to be bishops and pastors of the fold. The unanimity was so complete that the matter seemed definitely settled, and the ballot that had been asked for a mere formality.

The hat was passed round with a pocket-handkerchief covering it, each of us dropped in his coin, but all appeared to feel so certain of the result, that there was none of the usual excitement when the hat came back to the chair. What was not our stupefaction, however, when the President, upon raising the handkerchief, announced, in a somewhat shame-faced tone, that the Abbé Bonneau—the excellent, the saintly, the angelic Abbé Bonneau—had been treated to nine black balls! On hearing this declaration we hung down our heads and became dumb as fish, every one of us being convicted of hypocrisy. I suppose it is that we none of us had such a deep-rooted admiration for stainless virtue as we professed to feel; or, rather, that we feared to take for bishop a man whose countless perfections would remind us so constantly of our own shortcomings.

I shall not dwell upon the half-hour of almost silent voting that

followed the Bonneau incident, but hasten on at once to the moment when, after going right through our list, we found ourselves at last with only three more candidates, each of whom had already triumphed in a preliminary ballot, and now awaited the competitive test of a second. They were much of a muchness these three ecclesiastics. They would all have made excellent bishops, and had they been weighed in that famous pair of scales where so many of us, it seems, are found wanting, I fancy it would have been a delicate business to decide as to which was the heaviest or the lightest. One of them was the incumbent of the Church of Ste. Clorinde at Ville-Rosé; another was a canon at the cathedral; the third was none other than the dean himself.

This last candidate was, like most French deans, a very amiable little man. Reports said that he might have been a bishop over and over again, had he liked to exert himself. But, somehow, he preferred his oaken stall to an episcopal throne, and when pressed to ask for a mitre invariably exclaimed:—"Nenni, mes amis. If I become a Monseigneur shall I sleep better than I do at present, shall I look better, shall I dine better?" And when his friends answered him no, for it was, indeed, impossible to sleep, or to look, or to dine better, than did the little dean, then he smiled good-humouredly and said:—"There, you see, I have nothing to gain, and it would be tempting Providence to change my lot." One of the most winning characteristics of this little man's nature was this, that he never disagreed with anybody, and would thus, as a bishop, have been of infinite value to the Prefect. If M. de Fustige had said to him, "My dear Bishop, I hope you will exert all your influence for the Government candidate," he would certainly have promised to do so, and, what is more, would have kept his word, unless he had met the opposition candidate afterwards. In this latter case, however, the chances are two to one that he would have melted into tears at the recital of some republican grievance, and have voted for the liberals with all his heart. Everybody would have liked to see the Dean of Ville-Rose become bishop. He had such an honest face and such good round eyes. But, then, we knew it was no use to think about the matter; and so, after lamenting all round that he should have so little taste for gorgeous vestments and violet cassocks, we passed on to his two competitors.

The first of these gentlemen was a priest of the muscular Christian school. His parish of Ste. Clorinde lay on the outskirts of Ville-Rose, and on Sunday evenings after vespers, when the weather was fine, he might always be seen playing bowls with his parishioners in the field adjoining his vicarage. There was no conceit about him. His playmates were the blacksmith and the miller, the dairyman and the cow-boy. Anybody who liked to come was free to join in his game, and although the worthy man never stooped to, nor tolerated familiarity, yet he had always a pleasant word to say to everybody, and a frank, cheerful manner that made people glad to talk with him. L'Abbé Gourde was one of those priests who do an immense deal of good, and do it in the right way. He lived the life of his poorer parishioners, understood their requirements,

and enjoyed their confidence—which is the best praise that can be said of him, for to win the confidence of French peasants is much less easy work than it seems. With regard to political opinions it is not very sure that he had any. As a priest the Abbé was necessarily opposed to everything in the shape of radicalism; but it is doubtful whether his enthusiasm for the Empire, and its peculiar code of ethics, was either very deep or very genuine. However, at the elections he always voted for the Imperialist candidates and advised his flock to do the same. He was aware that a liberal priest in a diocese governed by an autocratic bishop, and in a department ruled over by a despotic prefect, leads but a sorry time of it.

L'Abbé Gourde's last competitor was a man of different, though not quite opposite, stamp. The *curé* of Sainte Clorinde was stout, hale, plain-spoken, a sound scholar and a shrewd reasoner. Monsieur le Chanoine Ponceau may have been a shrewd reasoner, and it is certain that he was an accomplished scholar; but he was neither hale, nor stout, nor excessively plain-spoken. In the matter of plain speech he rather took after the Dean. He agreed with people—and this, not with a crafty end in view, but simply because he abhorred discussions, and liked to keep on good terms with everybody. He was a man very honourable in all his acts, and exquisitely courteous in his demeanour. He detested everything that was shabby, vulgar, or mean; and despised villany of all sorts, rather as something dirty than as something wicked. In his sermons—which, by the way, were models of elegant French—he never appealed to any other feelings than those of honour and good taste. He used to point out that such and such things were unworthy and unbecoming; trying to make sinners ashamed of themselves, instead of attempting to frighten them with talk of hell. Perhaps his discourses had no very great effect upon the more thick-headed of his hearers, who did not understand what good taste was; but they used to make many so-called gentlemen look uncomfortable, and cause many selfish gentlewomen to fidget very uneasily on their seats. Canon Ponceau was extremely popular, however, as courteous men mostly are; and he was equally esteemed by all parties, because on no account whatever would he ever meddle in politics. "*Par le temps qui court la politique est un jeu malpropre*," he used to say in his quiet voice, "*et je n'aime pas me salir les mains.*"

Over these two candidates we debated for a full hour with infinite animation and no lack of eloquence:—

"I am for l'Abbé Gourde," said the General at last. "He is one of your downright men, such as I like. If you put a mitre on his head I'll warrant he soon becomes as great a bishop as Monseigneur Fulmine."

"I think he will," answered the Prefect, "and that's just what I am afraid of."

"Why afraid?" asks the Mayor.

"Because, Monsieur le Maire, it will be I who will have the work of keeping him in order; and mounting guard over a bishop is no sinecure, I assure you."

"I don't think M. Gourde looks quite as a bishop should," interposes the Marchioness, "he wears horribly thick boots."

"If that is all I daresay he will buy a thinner pair to quiet the consciences of his diocese," remarks the dry-humoured M. Sifflot.

"But he takes snuff, too," expostulates Madame la Générale, "and out of a penny box, with a leather thong for a spring."

"My dear, if you like to invest ten napoleons in buying him a gold one, I daresay he will accept it," grunts out the General.

"I think the discussion is straggling beyond its natural limits," observes the Marquis. "Let us go to the vote on the question as to which of these two priests will represent us best at the Œcumenical Council, and allow us to lead the quietest life afterwards. My man is Monsieur le Chanoine. He will make a scholarly speech that will be printed for its excellent Latin, but which will offend nobody. After the Council he will come back here, and rule the diocese in peace, breaking no one's head, nor exposing his own to be broken."

"Yes, and he's such a perfect gentleman," chimes in the Marchioness. "He always looks so neat, and well dressed."

"Yes, he wears thin boots," observes the Editor.

"Monsieur Jules Sifflot, I call you to order; you seem to think that the personal appearance of a bishop is of no moment whatever."

"Nay, Madame, but can we never hope to walk the road to preferment in clump soles? I am concerned in the matter, because my own boots are thick."

"As a man of the world, M. Sifflot, you ought to know that the way to preferment is not a road but a carpeted staircase," exclaims Madame la Préfète, laughing.

"Then the carpet must have an uncommon number of holes," responds the Editor, "for more than half my friends have cracked their shins over it."

"Come, gentlemen, let us discuss the matter seriously," interrupts the General, making a final appeal for the plain-speaking Abbé Gourde. "Look here, Monsieur le Préfet, the Curé of Sainte Clorinde always votes for Government, whereas the Canon votes for nobody."

"Yes, General, I know the Curé of Sainte Clorinde votes for us; but it is not so sure that the Bishop of Ville-Rosé would. Take the breeching off a mettlesome horse and he not unfrequently kicks over the traces. Believe me, we shall be wiser if we select the Canon."

This opinion of the Prefect's definitely settled the question. "I think poor M. Gourde will only have two votes," said the Marquise, taking up the ballot-hat. "Ladies and gentlemen, has anybody anything more to say?"

"One word, Madame la Présidente," cries the Prefect. "I think we have an additional reason for selecting the Canon in this fact, that he is well connected and in good odour at Court. We might have some difficulty in getting M. Gourde appointed; but I do not think there will be much trouble in obtaining the appointment of M. Ponceau."

"In that case I give in," says the General.

"So do I," echoes M. Sifflot. "If his reverence has friends at court to help him over the holes in the stair-carpet, poor M. Gourde is handicapped, and I see no chance for him."

"We will vote then," says the Marquise; "those who are for M. Ponceau put in gold, those for M. Gourde silver."

The hat went round as before, the coins were dropped in, and the next moment M. le Chanoine Ponceau was declared unanimously elected.

IV.

The election over, an adjournment to the supper-room was voted, and the health of our bishop-designate, proposed by Madame la Marquise and seconded by Madame la Préfète, was drunk in brimmers of champagne. Certes, if many hear no good of themselves when they lay their ears next a keyhole, others, more fortunate, might reap a few hours' exquisite bliss in listening from behind a door to what is being said of them within. I fancy M. Ponceau, for instance, would have found no reason to complain had some considerate spirit lifted him by the hair of his head and deposited him privately under our supper-table. For ninety minutes or so without cease, his trumpet was bravely blown for him to the tuneful accompaniment of jingling glasses and clattering silver forks, and when, at last, we rose from table (it being then 1.30 A.M.) a motion was carried to the effect that we should set to work at once upon the petition to Government, and not separate until all the preliminaries had been concluded.

So as not to lose time, however, the drawing up of the petition was confided to M. Jules Sifflot, who sat down to the task at once, and in less than half an hour had indited an address remarkable at once for its truth, its elevation of language, and its pathetic sentiments.

I subjoin this valuable document:—

To His Excellency the Minister of Justice.

Monsieur le Ministre,—

We, the undersigned inhabitants of the diocese of Ville-Rosé respectfully approach your Excellency in the hope that the recent heavy bereavement from which we are suffering will give us a claim to your sympathies and your attention. Your Excellency is aware that the genial Christian virtues which so pre-eminently distinguished our late Bishop rendered him inexpressibly dear to his flock. His patience, his modesty, his generous solicitude for all in sorrow, and, above all, the saintly humility which characterized the whole conduct of his life, gave him a place in our hearts such as had never been held before, save by his Majesty the Emperor, her Majesty the Empress, and his Highness the Prince Imperial. Under these circumstances it is but natural, Monsieur le Ministre, that in the first flush of our profound grief we should earnestly desire that the Bishop who is to succeed to Monseigneur's place in our diocese should also be the recipient of his wealthy heritage in our affections. Well knowing, as we do, how deep is the attention, how anxious the care, and how equitable the spirit which his Majesty's Government always brings to bear upon the selection of dignitaries for the Church or State, we freely confess that we could not do better than await the appointment which it may please his Majesty's

Government to make, confident that the appointment will be of a nature to satisfy our most cherished hopes and fill us with the liveliest gratitude. At the same time, should his Majesty's Government have not yet made choice of a candidate, we would most humbly venture to pray your Excellency to consider the claims of Monsieur le Chanoine Ponceau, a priest who seems to have been especially fashioned by Providence to pick up the mantle of Monseigneur Fulmine. Far be it from us to have recourse to any step which should seem to your Excellency to savour of presumption. But in the interests of truth we think it right to state that ever since the day when our late bishop left us, there has been a unanimous and heartfelt hope in the breast of every inhabitant of the diocese that the Government would select M. l'Abbé Ponceau. Children lisp the name of our beloved Canon in the streets, mothers bless him, old men pray for him ; his reputation for goodness, abnegation and charity is scarcely inferior to that of Monseigneur Fulmine. Shall we add that, like all the truly virtuous men of this land, M. Ponceau is deeply devoted to that Great Sovereign who has bestowed upon France seventeen years of uninterrupted order, and whose reign shines in the chronicles of our country with the beaming light of incomparable glory ? No, your Excellency has divined this, for had it been otherwise, M. Ponceau's name would not have had the support of the undersigned petitioners, who beg to subscribe themselves, with deepest respect,

Monsieur le Ministre,

Your Excellency's most humble, faithful, and obedient Servants.

"One would think you had done nothing but write petitions to Government all your life," says the Marquise, as M. Jules Sifflot finishes the reading of his composition.

"It's the official candidate style," answers M. Sifflot modestly. "I learned it from reading Monsieur le Marquis's addresses to his constituents and Monsieur le Préfet's speeches in favour of Monsieur le Marquis. It is a good style, rich and comprehensive, and has the merit of swallowing the whole leek at once without making any bones about it."

The Prefect and the Marquis look at each other and grin. Madame la Marquise raps M. Sifflot on the fingers ; but the petition is assented to nevertheless, and the only thing that now remains to be done is to arrange about obtaining the signatures. The General promises that two hundred men out of the garrison shall sign on the morrow morning, the Prefect will see that a like number of free and independent citizens shall affix their names in the forenoon, and the Mayor engages to collect signatures from all the maimed, halt, and sick in the hospital and asylums.

"What we want now," says Madame la Générale, "is a few of the clergy. It would look well if we had the signatures of a couple of hundred priests."

"Yes, it would," assents the Marquis ; "but the only way to get them would be to convince each of the two hundred that he was petitioning in favour of himself ; and that is a stroke of diplomacy which would require more time than we can spare."

"What do you say to doing this instead ?" asks the Marquise. "It's an idea that has just occurred to me. Suppose we go to the Abbé Bonneau, and get him to accompany you to Paris with the petition ? He is so good that he would do it willingly, and the effect produced would be excellent, for the dear man is known everywhere as a saint."

"Yes, but let us hope the Minister will appreciate his merits better

than we seem to have done," rejoins M. Jules Sifflot, laughing at the recollection of the nine black balls.

"I am certain he will," says the Marchioness, positively. "I was talking with his Excellency one day about this very Abbé Bonneau, and he told me the old man was the very best priest in France."

"And so he is very likely," answers Madame la Préfète;" but, after all, I don't think we can be blamed for not having voted for him. He would never do for a bishop; he would give all his clothes away to the poor, and leave himself not so much as his mitre to go to church in——"

The Prefect takes out his watch. "It's getting late," he interposes; "it's already past three. Let us settle our plans at once. Madame's idea about the Abbé Bonneau is a good one. Somebody had better see him without delay."

"That can be done whilst you are collecting the signatures," says the Marquis; "but I think the best plan of action will be for us all to meet at the prefecture at two, after the petition has been signed. We can then go together, and call upon Canon Ponceau, to tell him what we have been doing; and after that go to the Abbé Bonneau, who can take the five-o'clock train with us for Paris. If we manage things promptly, we shall be back here in thirty-six hours from this time, with M. Ponceau's appointment already signed and sealed."

This proposal was approved, and just as the first gleam of morning twilight was dawning, the guests of M. le Marquis left the Château de la Roche-Courbette, well pleased with having, as they fancied, manufactured a bishop, and promising to meet again at two.

V.

I will do the Prefect and the General this justice, that after a short hour or two's sleep, they set to work like men. The General, as soon as his breakfast was over, had two hundred rank and file marched up to his house, and explained to them, through the window, that they would have to come up, six at a time, into the vestibule, and sign a paper that was laid on the table; those who could not write would get those who could to sign for them. He added that it was about a new bishop, and asked them, for the form of the thing, whether they saw any objection. This idea tickled them so vastly, that they all began laughing together; upon which the General laughed too, and went back to take his coffee, announcing, however, before going, that any soldier who made blots should have two days in the *Salle de Police*. The Prefect, whose high position rendered it unadvisable that he should take too ostensibly prominent a part in the whole affair, deferred the task of collecting signatures to his secretary. This young gentleman, who was of an imaginative turn, forthwith went down to the lower end of the town, where some Government works were in progress, and presenting the workmen with some sheets of paper, told them laconically to write their names down; which they did, submissively, one by one, without asking questions. Fifty signatures having been obtained in this way, the

secretary paid domiciliary visits to three girls'-schools, where he undertook a brief panegyric of Canon Ponceau, paid a few compliments to the governesses, and obtained as many signatures as there were ladies. A hundred and ten, however, still remained to be found, and the young gentleman was beginning to feel tired. He accordingly chartered a small boy, to whom he gave a franc and a ream of foolscap, on the first page of which he wrote, in big letters, "*Votez pour Ponceau candidat eclectique.*" "You'll go," said he to the small boy, "and get a hundred and ten workmen to sign their names on to the blank pages. If they ask who Ponceau is, you will tell them he is a cousin of M. Henri Rochefort. If they want to know what *eclectique* signifies, you will say it means good dinners." An hour afterwards the small boy returned with three hundred names, many of which were interlarded with such appropriate exclamations as "*La Liberté ou la Mort!*" "*A bas les Tyrans!*" "*Vive la Lanterne!*" "*A Chaillot les Prêtres!*" &c. &c. The honest signitaries had thought that their votes were required on behalf of a "friend and brother," and had testified to the warmth of their sentiments in the usual way. "Bah!" laughed the secretary; "it doesn't much matter. Petitions sent to Ministers are always thrown into the waste-paper basket, and nobody ever thinks of looking at the signatures." And upon this he gave the small boy another franc, and walked back to the prefecture, pleased enough with his morning's work.

The Mayor, meanwhile, had been as busy as the General and the Prefect's secretary. He had gone recruiting suffrages in the charitable institutions under his control, and had obtained them as easily as he had at the last political election, when he had mustered such a fine collection of cripples to vote for the Prefect's candidate. But by this time the touting and canvassing in different quarters had begun to excite attention. Little by little the truth leaked out, and as news spreads fast in small towns where the inhabitants have nothing to do all day but count their fingers and thumbs, it very quickly became known that the authorities were starting a petition for having Canon Ponceau appointed bishop. We, then, had a reproduction of that eternally instructive story of Panurge's sheep. Seeing some of their fellow-townsmen signing their names on sheets of paper, divers ambitious citizens became possessed with the desire of signing too. Many men and women who could not possibly have the smallest interest in seeing M. Ponceau elected, hurried up feverishly to add their names to the petition. As the morning advanced and the rumours waxed more persistent, quiet people left their houses and went down into the streets to ask what the matter was. The day was a lovely one, and the cathedral bells, as it happened, were ringing full volley in honour of some saint. Of course this was somehow associated with the talk about M. le Chanoine Ponceau, and there were plenty who believed that the jubilant Canon was already treating himself to an exulting peal as thanksgiving for his appointment. Gradually a crowd began to gather round the door of the Mairie, where a copy of the petition was displayed for signatures, and, before long, the police had to be called into requisi-

tion to form the gathering into a long *queue*, and only admit signitaries three at a time. By twelve o'clock the Mairie had received a thousand names; by one, five hundred more had been added; and at two, when the nine promoters of the petition met at the prefecture according to arrangement, the crowd had already grown enthusiastic, and were for going and giving M. le Chanoine an ovation in front of his house.

"Our idea seems to have taken root," began the Marquis as soon as we were all collected.

"And what a noise it is making!" exclaimed the Marchioness, looking out of the window in astonishment at the tumultuous assemblage below.

"Yes," says the Prefect with evident uneasiness. "I begin to wish we had let the business alone. If the Government have already thought of some one for the appointment, they will not thank me for having got up all this uproar."

Madame la Préfète bit her lips, and looked out of the window with the Marquise: "Is there no way of stopping them?" she asked anxiously, not at all liking the idea of a quarrel between her husband and the Government.

"*Vive Madame la Préfète!*" cries an urchin in the crowd, who has perceived the two ladies.

"*Vive Rochefort!*" yelps another.

"*Ohé Lambert!*"

"*Vive Raspail! Hop! O La Lanterne!*"

"*A bas les Préfets de Ratapoil!*"

"Confound them, there they go," mutters the Prefect, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I ought to have foreseen all this."

"Well, all we've got to do now is to breast it," observes Jules Sifflot resolutely. "I think, too, we ought to go and call on Canon Ponceau at once, for he won't be able to understand what on earth all this means."

"To be sure, we have been forgetting the Canon; he must be half out of his wits by this time," exclaims the Marquis.

"We had better all go there together," says the Prefect. "When we have seen him we will look up the Abbé Bonneau, and then go straight off to Paris. Minutes are becoming precious. By hook or crook we must get Ponceau appointed."

The ladies adjusted their bonnets, the men put on their hats, and the whole party of nine of us went down the staircase and sallied out into the Square together. With such a crowd as there was it was impossible that we could pass unnoticed. The Prefect, the General, the Mayor, and the Marquis, were recognized immediately. The shouting and chaffing ceased. There was an exchange of salutations, a falling back right and left; and then the whole crowd, re-forming itself in our rear, followed us in silence to see where we were going. So long as we were in the market-place the quiet continued; but when it became visible that we were making for the church precincts where the Canons lived, our escort took it as a matter of course that we were going to pay a visit of congra-

tulation to M. Ponceau, and burst out into cheers, rare and faint at first, but growing gradually louder and more general, until they culminated into an immense and frantic roar when we finally stopped before the Canon's house :—

"For Heaven's sake, M. le Préfet, what does all this mean?" stammered M. Ponceau, opening the door to us himself, and showing us into his parlour. He was very pale and agitated, and trembled whilst speaking.

"There's been a mob there all the morning," he added, excitedly, without waiting for an answer. "Every time I go to the door they shake their hats at me and shout. I can't learn what it is they want?"

"We have come to explain," said the Prefect, unable to help smiling at the Canon's startled appearance, "but we owe you an apology for not having come earlier. The secret is this, my dear M. Ponceau, we are using our influence to try and get you made a bishop, and the people somehow have got wind of our scheme."

"Me a bishop!" exclaimed M. Ponceau, standing stock-still, with his two hands on his breast, and looking at us with perfect stupefaction.

We had not counted on his showing so much surprise, and his emotion rather disconcerted us.

"You don't mean to say you would refuse a bishopric?" says the Prefect amazed.

M. Ponceau passed his hand across his brow and sat down without for the moment making any reply. He seemed not yet able to realize what he had heard, and took time to collect himself.

"Excuse me for this nervousness," he replied at last, speaking in the soft voice habitual to him. "The events of the morning have rather unsettled me, and your communication is so unexpected that I do not yet know what to say to it."

"We should all be so glad to see you a bishop!" observes the Marquise gently.

"You have done me a great honour," answers M. Ponceau, with quiet earnestness; "an honour such as it needs a lifetime of gratitude to repay. But forgive me if I tell you that the honour is not one I ever coveted. I know most men say this when they are raised to dignities; but with me it is the truth. I had grown to love the quiet life I lived here amidst my books, and I have passed that age when the prospect of entering upon a career of ambition could compensate me for throwing off long-cherished and familiar habits. What you offer me is a crown, Monsieur le Préfet, and crowns are always heavy when our heads have turned grey."

"Still, you must not refuse," pleads the Marquise.

"Nor do I, Madame," answers the priest. "I should be ashamed to decline an honour without having a better excuse than that it seemed to me irksome."

"That's well spoken, sir," says the General. "For my part, I don't think a man has any right to refuse honours; unless, that is, he feels

too weak to bear them; which I am sure," adds the old soldier politely, "is not the case with you."

"We mustn't be going too far, however, and raising false hopes," interposes the Prefect, recalled to a sudden sense of realities by some more cheering outside. "Mind we have not got you your bishopric yet; M. Ponceau, we are going to Paris about it to-day."

Here the Marquis and the Prefect's wife explained to the Canon how a petition had been drawn up for presentation to the Government, and how it was already covered with several thousand signatures. M. Ponceau listened and seemed touched. He had been quite sincere in asserting that he loved his present mode of life and was loath to leave it; but a man must be made of wood who can hear unmoved that thousands of men are exerting themselves to do him honour, and are hailing his name with shouts of good-will. No doubt had the amiable Canon been able to peep behind the scenes and see how the comedy of the petition had been started, and what was the real intrinsic value of most of the cheers he heard, he would have felt a considerable number of illusions abandon him. But happily for him he could not see behind the scenes, and thus had every reason to look proud and pleased at the flattering recital that was made him. To have been appointed bishop by the sole will of the Emperor or one of his Ministers, would not have gratified him over much; but to be raised to the episcopal chair by the unanimous voice of his diocese was an honour so great that, being really modest, M. Ponceau could not help asking himself what he had done to deserve it.

"Mind, we shall expect to hear some splendid speeches from you at the Œcumenical Council; where of course you will go to represent our diocese," smiles the Marquise.

"Depend upon it, Madame, that it will be my constant effort to try and repay the kindness shown me by representing Ville-Rosé worthily." And as he spoke a flash of generous ambition gleamed before the Canon's eyes. He fancied he saw himself standing amongst the bishops at St. Peter's and amazing them by his eloquence; and the thought of the pride which his diocese might feel at his triumphs, gave him the pleasure which gladdens an honourable man at the hope of repaying a benefactor.

But with all this it was getting time to be gone. The cathedral clock had chimed half-past three, and we had no more than an hour and a half before the train started. We accordingly took our leave of the Canon, who accompanied us to the door, no longer alarmed now by the tumult which burst out afresh as soon as we reappeared. He thanked us cordially for what we were doing for him, and shook hands with us all round.

"Good-by, M. Ponceau," says the Prefect. "I hope this time to-morrow we may be back here with good news."

"You start at once?" asks the Canon from his doorway.

"Yes; at least we are going to call on the Abbé Bonneau first. We intend taking him with us to help plead your cause."

"Dear me! but I am afraid you will be disappointed of finding him," answers M. Ponceau. "I do not think he is here."

"Not here!" cries the Prefect, turning round.

"No. I called at his house yesterday, and they told me he had gone to Paris."

This was a strange piece of news, that took us all aback. A journey to Paris on the part of the Abbé Bonneau was a thing so utterly unprecedented, that occurring at this particular juncture it struck us as something ominous. The Abbé lived like an anchorite, never stirring beyond his parish. What could he possibly want in Paris, and at this moment too? We mused upon this question as we went along, and could find no feasible reply to it. The crowd, which had become perfectly convinced by this time that M. Ponceau had either been, or was just on the point of being, appointed bishop, followed us as closely as ever, and thought, no doubt, to give us pleasure by cheering and leaping, as if the Millennium had come. Some of the smaller citizens turned somersaults in the mud, to mark their keen appreciation of M. Ponceau's virtues; a few more struck up *Partant pour la Syrie*, to testify to their loyalty towards the Imperial dynasty. At the prefecture we stopped to take our carpet-bags, and the famous petition, which had swelled in bulk to the size of a fine folio volume. In the excited state of public opinion we judged it scarcely prudent to have carriages to carry us to the station; for once a crowd has taken into its head to be enthusiastic, there is no knowing to what lengths it may go. It was just as likely as not that the mob, having nothing else to do, might insist upon unharnessing our horses and dragging us in triumph round the market-place. We set out on foot, therefore, as previously, the ladies going with us to see us off, and five footmen marching behind with the luggage. On our way we called at the Abbé Bonneau's house, a small cottage with a thatched roof and a single chimney-pot. It had occurred to us that perhaps the Abbé had returned, or that at all events we might learn why he had gone. But we found him still away, and we could gather nothing from his housekeeper but that he had started off suddenly with his curate a few days ago upon receipt of a large letter in a blue envelope from Paris. This was too vague to help us much, but when we had turned away, the old woman, as if suddenly remembering an important clue, called out to us at the top of her voice that the letter had no stamp to it, but that there had yet been nothing to pay. This news caused the Prefect to arch his eyebrows, and the General to utter a formidable "Humph!" for the letters with no stamps on them and nothing to pay are usually the products of Government offices, and what the Abbé Bonneau could have to do with such, we were at a loss to understand.

Upon arriving at the station we found that we had still twenty minutes before us, and that a train was just coming in from Paris. We were all silent, pondering over the Abbé Bonneau's mysterious absence. The Marquise suggested he must have had a legacy. Madame la Générale wondered whether he had not been summoned to hear a lecture from the Minister of Justice upon his charitable prodigalities, which left him often with scarcely shoes to his feet. His Excellency the Minister was

known to be a great stickler about the clergy maintaining a becoming appearance, and it was just possible he might have wished to inform M. Bonneau that a clergyman, with holes to his boots, is an object deserving of censure. We were in the midst of our speculations and doubts, when the Paris train came rumbling into the station, and whom should we see looking out of one of the windows, with his usually placid face, but this very Abbé Bonneau. It escaped none of us that he was travelling in a first-class carriage, and that his curate was sporting a new hat and a pair of black gloves, unaccustomed luxuries.

"Mon cher Monsieur Bonneau," says the Préfet, running forward and holding out his hand, "how delighted I am to see you."

"This is really very good of you, Monsieur le Préfet," falters the old man with beaming looks. "I didn't know the news had travelled so fast, but, to be sure, I had forgotten the telegraph. Thank you all kindly for coming to meet me; it's very thoughtful of you."

"Ahem!" coughs the Prefect, not quite understanding. "I suppose you have had a legacy, my dear Abbé. So Madame la Marquise thought, and we all beg to offer our congratulations. But, ahem! we are going to ask a favour of you, and we hope——"

"Anything in the world I can do to oblige you, Monsieur le Préfet," breaks in the poor old Abbé, perplexed.

"Well, it's just this," continues the Prefect, "and you will excuse us for being so abrupt, but the fact is, we have very little time before us. We have been getting up a petition in the diocese to have Canon Ponceau made Bishop of Ville-Rosé. We are going now to Paris to carry this petition to the Minister of Justice, and we want you to accompany us——"

"O Mon Dieu!" stammers the old Abbé, becoming terribly red. "Then you have not heard the news yet."

"What news?" asks the Prefect, breathless.

"Why—why—O dear me, how sorry I am for all this—Monsieur le Prefet, why I have just come from Paris—from the Minister of Justice, and the vacancy is filled up."

"Filled up!" cries the Prefect, aghast; "and by whom?" But he had no need to await a reply, for the Abbé's curate coming up at that moment, took off his hat, and said respectfully—

"The luggage is in the fly, *Monseigneur*."

Our new Bishop was the Abbé Bonneau.

The King of Sweden's Poems.*

That the present ruler of Sweden and Norway ranks among the most accomplished of living European sovereigns is a fact probably familiar to a large number of our readers, but few even of these are, we daresay, exactly aware of the true character and extent of his accomplishments. It may be, therefore, interesting to state that one of his chief claims to the distinction which has, by general consent, been assigned to him, exists in the circumstance that, although born a monarch, he has chosen to become a denizen, like ourselves, of the Republic of Letters, and has given proof of his fitness for such a citizenship by the publication of one or two volumes of poetry—the works that now lie before us, and to which, as we presume they are in great measure unknown in England, we propose briefly directing the attention of our readers. In a singularly modest preface to one of these volumes, the royal poet informs us that its contents had been in private circulation for some time before they were given to the world. Several of the poems, however, having obtained publicity through a French translation entitled *Légendes et Poèmes Scandinaves traduits du Suédois, par G. B. de Lagrèze, Conseiller à la Cour Impériale de Pau*, the author had no longer any scruples about permitting their appearance in the original form. The first-named volume contains the two longer poems, *Heidi* and *En Vikingasaga*, along with a number of shorter compositions; and the second-named volume is a small collection of songs and occasional verses, published about two years afterwards.

Whatever opinion may be held with regard to the abstract merits of King Carl the XV.'s poetry, there can be little doubt entertained as to its comparative value and significance. There exists in it abundant proof that its author has been endowed by nature with no inconsiderable portion of the divine gift of song; and, anxious as we are to avoid aught resembling exaggerated praise, we do not hesitate to affirm that in many passages, more especially of the larger volume, there are vivid traces of something greatly beyond the ordinary facile flow of verse, which is too often deemed sufficient to entitle its composer to the illustrious name of poet. The royal author, indeed, wields evident mastery over the noble and sonorous language in which he writes; but there is more, a good deal more than this: there is a certain graceful power, a certain pictorial beauty, in his description of men and things, his portraiture of character and landscapes, which, if we do not greatly mistake, appertains to what is absolutely essential in all poetry that really deserves the appellation. Languor and

* 1. *En Samling Dikter.* Af C. F. Stockholm: Samson and Wallin. 2. *Smärre Dikter.* Af. C. Stockholm: Samson and Wallin.

diffuseness are, it cannot be denied, occasionally perceptible, and we can also mark at times the presence, in the shorter poems, of a sentimentalism that almost verges on morbidity; but a sound and healthy objectiveness distinguishes the longer compositions, and it is only here and there that the smaller poems betray the presence of an unduly subjective element. There is, moreover, one thing which is their prominent and very pleasant characteristic: they are, although pictorial, wonderfully free from the vice of over-done word-painting, which to so painful an extent impairs much of the poetry, otherwise commendable, produced at the present day. There is no extravagant opulence of diction and illustration; the figures employed are, although perfectly appropriate, for the main part chaste and simple; and the feeling evoked in the mind of the reader is consequently that of calm repose, instead of exhausting confusion and bewilderment. Such, at least, is the impression left by their perusal on ourselves.

Were additional evidence requisite to prove the loyal and loving zeal with which the Bernadotte dynasty has ever striven to identify itself with all that is distinctively Scandinavian, and distinctively Swedish in particular, it would be found in these poems, the chief of which rest upon a thorough northern basis, and are supremely redolent in every page of Scandinavian thought and feeling. The late King Oscar was carefully trained by his sagacious father in accordance with Swedish ideas and usages, and thereby fitted as Crown Prince for the duties so ably discharged by him after his ascension to the throne; and his own appreciation of the literature of the country over which he ruled appears to have descended in yet larger measure to his son, the present monarch. In the spirit that pervades some portions of King Carl's poetry we may trace the influence of the southern blood of the successful soldier of the Empire, of Eugene Beauharnais and the Bavarian princess he espoused; but its prevalent tone is northern,—a striking proof that hereditary characteristics, however powerful, have not been strong enough to counteract the sway of early education and development. But, be this as it may, the fact is unquestionable that in these poems the Scandinavian element preponderates, for not merely are *Heidi* and the *Vikingasaga* founded on themes drawn from early Swedish history, and not merely do they display a singular acquaintance with the grand mythology of the Eddas, but the whole treatment of the subject, in the case of either poem, is thoroughly in keeping with the manner of the Sagas, if we except one point, to which we shall presently refer. Those familiar with modern Swedish literature will at once comprehend our meaning when we state that it is to the school of the "Goths," and not the "Phosphorists," that King Carl emphatically belongs. Tegnér's *Frithiofssaga*—that beautiful, but, as we humbly conceive, somewhat overrated poem—appears to have been his foremost model; and, although there is quite enough of originality in *Heidi* and the *Vikingasaga* to redeem them from the charge of aught in the shape of servile imitation, the reader is too frequently reminded of Tegnér's defects as well as of his excellences. For, in the Swedish

monarch's poetry, we find the passion of love, which plays so prominent a part in the two works just mentioned, arrayed at times in a garb unduly modernized—represented as nourishing itself on vague self-reflection and mere romantic sentiment, instead of appearing as the sound and active, yet lasting, influence, in which form it is pourtrayed to us in the old songs and stories of northern Europe. Now, as has been so often pointed out, —among others by Heiberg, the ablest of the Danish critics,—it is this very thing which constitutes the leading blemish in Tegnér's most celebrated work. Frithiof woos Ingeborg, and Ingeborg returns his suit, in the style of a youth and maiden of the nineteenth century, and not in accordance with our idea of love-making as practised by the heathen Scandinavians at the early period when Frithiof and his mistress lived. King Carl, following in the Bishop of Vexiö's footsteps, has unfortunately allowed the defect in question,—one of the few vices impairing the immortal *Frithiofssaga*,—to deface, in some measure, his two larger works; but, with this exception, the course of the narrative and the representation of characters are true to the spirit of the ancient north. Let us, however, now give a brief account of *Heidi* and the *Vikingasaga*, accompanied by a few translations.

The first of these poems, while containing numerous specimens of the most varied versification, is mainly written in a somewhat peculiar and rhymeless, yet, in the Swedish, sufficiently musical measure, which nevertheless loses not a little of its easy flow when we attempt to reproduce it in our own language. Still, as we wish to give as faithful an English rendering as possible in the brief extracts we have chosen, we prefer adhering with all fidelity to the measure of the original verse.

There lieth a lake in the rock-girded Norland,
The shores of old Sweden are washed by its wavelets,
And Mälar 'tis called, the fairest of waters;
Full oft have its praises been sung by the Scalds.
So Saga recounts how Gefion the stately,
Announcing the northward advance of the Aser,
Was gifted by Gylfe the agèd with land,
"As much as her plough ere sunset could sever
And cast from the shore;" how Gefion compelled
The four young Jättar to yield her obedience,
And draw, like unswerving steeds, her plough,
While Gefion guided it, helped by Vala.
And so she ploughed, from the groves of Sweden,
The soil which far in the south she gave
To Dana, the beech-clad, blossoming Zealand.
But fairest of all the bays of Mälar,
Is Vängarn, green to the water's verge.
How glance the rounded crowns of the beech-trees
Deep in the lake; how rivulets murmur
Among the blossoms their song of spring!
At eventide there the cliffs in the distance
Gleam golden through the shadows; while Delling,
Keen glancing out of the purple orient,
Awakens Nature from nightly slumber;
How sweet to listen to Saga then!

Gylfe, the father of Heidi, is an ancient Swedish monarch, far advanced in life at the time when the Aser, led by Odin, approach the North in their march of conquest and triumph from their distant Asiatic home. Our author has adopted the theory of some mythologists, who believe in the existence of a two-fold Odin; the second being a pontiff-warrior, assuming the appellation and laying claim to the attributes of a previous Odin, long received and worshipped as a god. Hence, throughout the poem, we find as active agents, on the one hand the heavenly Odin, with his Aser (or deities of Valhalla), and on the other hand, the earthly Odin, with *his* Aser, or attendant warriors,—a circumstance at first view rather perplexing to readers ignorant of the hypothesis to which we have just referred. That hypothesis we believe to be untenable as a supposed fact; but it may, of course, be quite legitimately used for poetic purposes, and the author has thus employed it with no small measure of success. It is at the time when Gylfe, bowed down by age and infirmity, calmly contemplates impending death, that Odin—the second Odin, the pontiff-warrior, be it borne in mind—enters Sweden at the head of his Asiatic host. Heidi, a true maiden of the North, blending with a woman's profoundest tenderness the heroism pre-eminently characteristic of the ancient Scandinavian females, advises her father to resist the invaders, saying that she herself will engage to lead his subjects to the field. But the wise old sovereign smiles at her proffered services, and tells her that he has already concluded a treaty of peace with Odin and his followers—dominion in the North henceforth appertaining to the Aser and their chief alone.

So the Temple of Sigtuna is erected, and there the new ruler offers sacrifice to the gods. Yet the Jotar and the Jättar—the race of the powers of evil, ever hostile to the gods and to man, and bitter foes alike of Gylfe and of Odin—arm in numbers for the combat, and there ensues a deadly struggle between their legions and the forces of the new monarch; a struggle terminating in complete victory gained by the Aser, and the succeeding consolidation of their power. The chief incident of the fight is the wound inflicted on Sigurlam, the valiant son of Odin, by Starkotter, one of the victor's most inveterate antagonists. Freya, by her divine influence, removes Sigurlam from the battle-field to the shores of Lake Lögar, heals his wound, and, guiding Heidi to his neighbourhood, inspires him with a consuming passion for King Gylfe's daughter. But Heidi does not as yet return it; her destiny is to be a priestess in the temple of the gods; and it is only at the hour of her consecration that her heart begins to reciprocate the love of Sigurlam. It seems to have awakened too late; she is solemnly devoted to the service of the deities, and her lover departs to Norway, bent, like his father, on farther schemes of conquest. The gods whom she serves compassionate the fate of Heidi, and give her, to lull her sorrows, the gift of supernatural knowledge, so that she becomes a "Vala" or prophetess, the interpreter of the past and the revealer of the future. Here are some of her strains:—

Over land and sea
Is my march sublime,
Like the shaping Spirit
At the birth of time ;
The voice of the gods I obey,
And sing the dawn of creation's Day.

Darkness the boundless,
Senses of mortals
Cannot conceive,—
Eye of Val-father
Lit the abysses ;
High on a fire-cloud
Through the wide regions
Winged he his way ;
Man's earth creating
Out of the giant
Body of Ymer.
Born then was Korè,
Spirit of tempests,
Blowing from north, from
South, and from east.
Egir on ocean
Played with the billows,
Foaming and free.
Throned was the sun, our
World to enlighten ;
Men to existence
Sprang on its breast.
Vainly does Lokè
Writhe in his torments,
Fast-bound in fetters
Forged by the gods.
Vainly his spouse the
Viperous venom
Aye dropping o'er him,
Dreams to detain.
Yet shall the day dawn,
Ragnarök awful,—
Day of all changes,
Day of all doom.
Nathless it brings not
To the Supreme One
Change or destruction ;
He shall survive it,
Star-clad, exalted
High on his throne ;
Nothing can shatter
Val-father's power.

Mortals so feeble !
When ye shall hear the
Giallar-horn sounding,
Calling to battle
Hosts of the Aser,
Then burst the fetters
Wreathed around Lokè,
Fenris-wolf rages,
Hideous and wild ;
Blood runs in rivers,
Dealt are the death-wounds,
Earth in her anguish
Rendeth in twain.
Nathless the broken
Wide-severed fragments,
Once more united,
Fashion a lovely
Blossoming isle !
Found, too, is Balder,
Radiant Asa,
Ruler again.
Night to day changes,
Age becomes youth,—
Reign over all things
Glory and joy.
Thenceforth shall Love be
Monarch of mortals,
Peace shall in brotherhood
Bind men and gods.
Later-born races,
Peopling the new-made
Ages, shall listen
Glad to the voice of
Saga when singing
Praise of the light that
Visited Valhal,—
Spirit creative,
Framer of All !

Only those, doubtless, who are familiar with the Scandinavian mythology can be expected fully to understand the meaning of many of the allusions in the preceding extract ; yet we think that even readers whose acquaintance with old northern literature is but superficial, will perceive that the author has grasped, to a considerable extent, the spirit of the ancient Scalds, and that the measure he employs, with its emphatic ring and frequent expressive alliterations, is well-fitted to embody the Vala's retrospect of the things that have been, and her prediction of those that are yet to come.

Odin frees Heidi from the painful despotism,—for it has now assumed such a form,—of the gift of prophecy she has received, and immediately

afterwards occurs her father's death. Three winters pass away; Sigurlam at last returns from Norway, and, after a series of minor incidents, to which we cannot more fully allude, he is espoused to Heidi, and they leave Sigtuna for Quenland, where the victorious son of Odin has now established his kingdom. A son is born to Sigurlam, and his days are, for a season, spent in comparative peace. But the old enmity of the Jotar and Jättar, although slumbering, has never been destroyed; they make a combined assault on Sigurlam, at a favourable opportunity, and when almost overpowered, he is rescued by his son, now rapidly nearing manhood, and emulating his sire's prowess and renown. A second attempt of the Jotar is unfortunately successful, and after performing prodigies of valour, Sigurlam expires on the battle-field. Odin, who at Sigtuna learns the tidings of Sigurlam's death, sails to Quenland, blesses his grandson, and consecrates him to the grateful task of inflicting vengeance on the Jotar for his father's untimely fate. When returning, Odin has a marvellous vision, described in the following verses:

Already the darkness of night is falling;
No longer the fir-tree shakes to the tempest,
The winds themselves seem wrapped in quiet;
O'er earth, with noiseless foot, sleep wanders,—
The flower now lulling, the bird now rocking
That dreams of its mate amid the branches,—
Its mate already in Southern groves.
And Odin himself his head reclineth
Against a moss-grown pine,—whose roots
A hundred years in the earth have flourished,—
And then the Spirits of Light surround him
With radiant visions, and sing of rest
And peace pervading the realm of nature;
While swift arise on the wings of foresight
His thoughts to the dome of high-arched heaven.
Clear he discerns the golden Temple,
Where Valhal's gods in their splendour dwell;
Where sits Val-father, the warriors hailing
Who, freshly-wounded, approach his throne.
He hears the gold-harp, struck by Bragi,
Of glorious battle-fields rings each tone;
His hammer Thor, at the sound, is pressing
Close to his bosom, as 'twere a maiden,
For whom his heart, like a lover's, throbs.
And stately Freya, with face as fair
As gleams the light of the pole-star through
The blue serene of the midnight skies,
Her milk-white hand to her spouse outstretches
And bears to his own the foaming goblet,
Which, sitting high with the gods, he quaffs.
A tear of gold on her cheek is falling,
But vanishes soon amid the roses
That redden the lily hills below.
Yet like the sun in his eastern dawning,
Balder the good mid the Aser sits.

With peaceful glance on the earth he gazes
And beckons towards the dreaming Odin,
Whose sleep-sealed eye on the wings of vision
Aloft is borne through the distant spaces,
And follows the mild, the loving God!
At last he discerns a blood-stained altar—
Death-struck victims are near it piled,
Yet scarce he marvels at what he sees,
Ere passes away the gold-roofed Temple,
And there, on the spot that bore its columns,
A cross points upwards, and seeks the skies!
He hears a song in the starry regions,
By unseen spirits the strain is sung:

"Atonement is made,
The temple o'erthrowing;
The Cross is displayed,
With peace overflowing!
An offering of blood
To satisfy heaven,
No more shall ye render;
The *heart* it is solely,
The *heart* it is wholly
Ye henceforth shall tender!"

Odin afterwards meets Heidi, and endeavours to comfort her in her sorrow for her husband's fate. She sings her "Swan Song," seeks and finds death in the waters, while Odin's own departure immediately follows. Like a true Scandinavian warrior, he transfixes his breast with the sword that has so often shone in the light of battle,—his soul ascends to Valhalla; and thus the poem terminates.

Some general idea of the plan and character of *Heidi* may be afforded to the reader by this imperfect sketch: yet there are various points of interest in the work, to which we have found it impossible to refer. For example, we would have liked to dwell on the lyrics interspersed throughout the poem, some of which—such as the heroine's "Swan Song"—seem to us to possess peculiar merit. But we are constrained to pass to the *Vikingasaga*, the second of King Carl's two longer pieces, and, we think, in certain respects superior to the first. It is written in verse of the *Hiawatha* fashion, which runs, on the whole, in graceful and pleasant flow; while like *Heidi*, it is largely intermingled with lyrics in various styles of verse. We translate the introductory lines:—

Mid the ancient pine-tree forests
Far in Norland, home of warriors,
Linger yet old Saga mem'ries
Treasured from the Asa days.
Deeds of valour by the poets
Were embalmed in song that chaunted
High the praise of heroes dwelling
In sea-girded Swithiod.
Everywhere were found in Nature
Spirits fitted to interpret
Saga-tales of Sweden's childhood.
For in Lögar Lake the kelpie
Smote his golden harp at even,
And the water-spirit's music
Echo bore across the billows
To the distant reedy shore.
Fairies on the emerald pasture,
Like a troop of misty shadows,
Stole around the sleeping blossoms.
In the forests dwelt the Vättar,—
Airy figures softly cradled
On the branches of the trees,—

Listened to the voice of song-bird,
Joyed when summer-winds caressed them,
Hid themselves when tempest roared.
But concealed from human vision,
In the mountain clefts and chasms,
Lived the dwarfs,—a crafty race!
Odin's eye they still avoided,
Hated still the radiant Balder,
Trembled for the mighty Thor.
Seldom into light they ventured;
First, when swarthy night was robing
All things in her veil of darkness,
Stole they from their rocky prison.
One peculiar gift they boasted,—
How to forge the stubborn steel.
Far renowned was dwarfish labour,
For the weapons which it fashioned
Smote the very rocks asunder,
Pierced like serpent-tooth the hauberk,
Laid the bravest warrior low.
Thus they forged the wondrous falchion,
Tirfing called, for aye victorious;
But its blade with poison sprinkled
Now was hidden, and scarce any
Knew the place of its concealment,
Where it lay, and wrapt in silence
Dreamed its ghastly felon-dream!

Orient now, in robes of purple,
Pioneers the Lord of Light,
Delling, soon to greet in glory
Earth from deepest sleep awakened.
Nightly dreams, the elves of even,
Flee afar to realms unknown;
Only on the grass are traces
Of the tears the Night has shed.
Every flow'ret's open chalice
Turns to hail the dawning splendour;
And the song-birds in the forest
Raise a wordless morning-hymn.
Greenest boughs the trees are stretching
O'er the mirror of the waters,
And their stately crests lie pictured
In the glassy plain below.
From the new-lit arch of heaven
Radiance on the waves is falling,
While the white stems of the birch-trees
Seem a flock of royal maidens
Bathing, clad in morning robes.
And the stream's joy-drunken billow
Gathers tribute, like a Viking,
From the beauty of each region
Which it passes in its course.
In the distance stretches Ocean,
Gleaming bright, a giant mirror
Set in giant granite frame.
Sotaskär the place is titled,
Which affords a trusty harbour
To the Viking's stately sea-steeds,
When they rest from battle-conflict,
Or, to 'scape the scathe of tempests,
Seek a haven for a time.

There is no novelty in the plan of *En Vikingasaga;* it is simply a well-known Scandinavian legend, the old northern tale of truest affection between man and man, and of love between man and woman stronger far than death. Hjalmar and Oddur first met each other in hostile guise; but exchanging sentiments of enmity for those of friendship, they eventually plight troth as foster-brothers, and preserve their vow unbroken to the end. King Anè, ruling at Sigtuna, whose chief warrior is Hjalmar, has a fair daughter, Ingeborg, who is sought in marriage by Hjorvard, son of Arngrim, a neighbouring sovereign. Appearing at Anè's court, accompanied by his eleven brothers, he demands the hand of Ingeborg, which demand is met by a counter-claim on the part of Hjalmar. Anè leaves the matter to the maiden's decision, who gives Hjalmar the preference. Fired with rage, Hjorvard challenges his successful rival to single combat on the island of Samsö, the favourite scene of such encounters in the north. The challenge is accepted, and, amid the tears of Ingeborg, due preparations are made for the hostile meeting. Meanwhile, Angantyr, one of Hjorvard's brothers, procures from the dwarfs their fatal sword, Tirfing, the poison-sprinkled blade of which is victorious over every antagonist. On the shore of Samsö the rivals engage in conflict, each accompanied by his friends or relatives; Oddur kills Hjorvard and his

brethren, with the exception of Angantyr, who, wielding Tirfing, mortally wounds Hjalmar, and is himself slain by that champion at the moment of his fancied triumph. Oddur carries back to Ingeborg the ring which she had given her betrothed previous to his departure on his fatal errand, and she presses it to her lips in a transport of passionate emotion. But the poison of Tirfing, with which it has been saturated, immediately does its deadly work, and Ingeborg gladly goes to rejoin her lover in the world of shades. This, it will be seen, is just the story so common in the ancient Scandinavian annals, and so characteristic of the ancient Scandinavians themselves. It is well treated, however, by our author; and Ingeborg's womanly nature, different from that of Heidi,—every way softer and more amiable,—is pourtrayed with a tender and skilful hand. We give two extracts, the first being Ingeborg's introduction to the reader :—

Pause, O shining wave of Fyris,
Hasten not to Lögar lake!
Linger by the verdant margin,
By the flow'ret's open blossom
Which its graceful head is bending,
Thirsty, to thy pearly waves!
Pause, enraptured by the beauty
Of the emerald groves around,
Where the breeze of spring is blowing
Through the greenly clust'ring branches.
All in vain!—the pictures, Fyris,
Which have glassed themselves so often
On the surface of thy waters,
Cannot check their rapid journey
To the goal they seek for aye.

But, whene'er they see a damsel
Fair as Freya, on their margin,
Breathing forth in silver music
All her spirit's secret sorrows,
Will they still refuse to pause?—
Pause to witness how the maidens
Of the North may burn with passion
Like the summer-sun aglow,
Yet within their hearts' recesses
Hide it till their dying moment?
Pause, O wave, extend thy mirror
To receive and keep the image
Of the king-born maiden's shape!
Ingeborg the strand is nearing;
Canst thou not delay thy journey?
Never rested, happy Fyris,
Image like the royal damsel's
In thy waves' embrace till now!

Likest to a rose fresh-springing,
When it bursts the leafy girdle
Which enclosed its virgin blossom,
And displays its perfect splendour
To its spouse, the summer-sun,—
From the forest's green concealment
Ingeborg now passes forth.
Golden locks unbound are waving
Round her brow of alabaster,—
Fairer is not Freya's forehead,—
And upon her cheek is dawning
Light like that with which Aurora
Faintly flushes eastern skies.
Moving slender as a bulrush,
Hiding milk-white neck and bosom
'Neath her mantle's winding wavelets,
Steps she with the step of Zephyr
Rippling o'er a sea of flowers.

The next extract is of a totally different character. It describes the fatal combat on the isle of Samsö :—

To their ship the foster-brothers
Hasten by the sounding ocean;
But a sight of terror met them
As they reached the fatal bay;
Slain in mad Berserker battle
Were their comrades on the shore.
Hot had been the deadly combat,
For of Hjalmar's valiant champions
Not a single man had yielded
But a foot-length on the plain.
Filled with fiercest wrath was Hjalmar:
All his dark forebodings left him,
And the hero's voice resounded
Over Samsö's barren heath:
"Wildly the wolf-brood
Ravaged the sheep-fold,
Soon as they saw that
Gone were the shepherds
Who should defend it.
Come then, ye wild ones!

Keep not from conflict
Blood-dripping falchions!
Sore scream the ravens,
Waiting the banquet
I have designed them.
Gods of Valhalla
Send the avenger;
Lokè will hail you
Ere eventide!"

As he speaks the sons of Arngrim
Rush to meet him in the combat,
And eleven fall on Oddur,
Hjalmar faces Angantyr.
Loudly Oddur calls to Hjorvard:

"One by one
Step ye forth;
So it beseems
The brave to war!"

Hjorvard gladly greets his challenge,
And they interchange their blows,
Every sinew strained and starting
In the arms that wield the weapons.
Lifted swords the air are cleaving,
And they sound as sounds the storm.
Brief is Hjorvard's struggle, nathless,—
Soon he falls on the arena,
Brother after brother follows,
Till the soil is soaked with blood.
Oddur all unscathed beholds them
Sink to sleep in Death's embraces,
And to magnify the fallen,
Chaunts their mournful Drapa thus:

"Like the lofty
Lambent north-light,
Gleams the glory
Of your valour.
Now together
In the vaulted
Grass-grown barrow,
Shall ye slumber,—
Couch fraternal
Sadly sharing.
Cloven corselets
You shall follow,
That the lustrous
Lords of Valhal
Warm may welcome
Warlike heroes!"

When the song is ended, Oddur
Turns to mark the tide of combat,
As his foster-brother battles
With the savage Angantyr.
Dead reclines the giant Berserk,
Tirfing from his hand has fallen,—
But from Hjalmar, though victorious,
Life is ebbing fast away.
Oddur hails his foster-brother:

"How the strife has ended,
Hjalmar, I will ask not,
For of life the roses
On thy cheek are paling.
Proud has been thy triumph,—
Prouder triumph haply,
Hadst thou borne the tidings
Home to Fyris' waters,
Home to Ingeborg!"

Hjalmar with a final effort
To his foster-brother answers:

"Sixteen gaping
Wounds already
Have besmeared with
Blood the hauberk:
Tirfing's venom
Burns my body;
Death's red rune-words
On it written,
Summon me to
Valhal's portals.
Heavy has my
Fate been ever,—
Hardest when it
Tore me from thee,
Royal maiden!
Countless conquests
Have been Hjalmar's;
His renown has
Widely travelled,
Tracked the eagle
Over ocean,
Round the regions
Rolled in thunder;
But the hand of
Doom must smite us.
For, however
Bright and lovely
Smiles the morning,
Setteth sunset
On its splendour,
And in darkness
All is buried.
Life was granted
By Val-father;
Wiles of Lokè
Ever battle
With the wisest,
Highest Odin.

Change is therefore
Ruling all things;
Only honour,
Valour's glory,
Death-defying,—
Runes immortal,
Grandly graven,—
Deck Time's tablet
Through the ages!

"Foster-brother,
Take the gold-ring
Which she gifted
To her lover.
Faithful was I
To her passion.
Say to Ingeborg,
When the treasure
Thou returnest,
That the final
Word I uttered
Was the maiden's
Dearest name!"

Among the smaller compositions we may indicate *The Mermaid* and *The Three Nights* as especially meritorious. The first is a beautifully-worded adaptation of the usual old legend concerning the fatally destructive fascinations put forth by the fabled woman of the seas; only, in this case, the victim is rescued at the last moment by the holy memory of a perished earthly love. The moral is, therefore, sound and healthy, as in the case of *The Three Nights*. The latter poem is a kind of poetic commentary on that fragment of Heine's delicious music:

Die Sonne hebt sich noch einmal
Leuchtend vom Boden empor,
Und zeigt mir jene Stelle,
Wo ich das Liebste verlor.

In King Carl's verses the very loss of "Das Liebste" has, in the end, an all-potent spell wherewith to charm the agitated, half-maddened spirit, to restore to it former happiness and the old masculine energy and power.

There are some fine pieces in the later of the two volumes, such as *A Confession of Faith*, which we now translate:—

I in a God believe, who tenderly beholds us,
Who in His loving arms through all the years enfolds us,
A God who has been aye, who is, and who shall be,
When Time's dominion falls, and earth's vain splendours flee.
The sun that smiles serene, arrayed in golden lustre,
The moon that nightly shows her silver face,
The flowers that on the meadow richly cluster,—
All these are bounties of His grace.

I in a Love believe, which from high heaven's palace
In life's primæval dawn came down to earth's low valleys,—
Which round the maiden's locks the myrtle taught to twine,
And in the anguished soul drops peacefulness divine.
O'er throbbing human hearts it ever reigns victorious,
Mid Polar snows, or deserts' arid sand,
And, triumphing, weaves garlands green and glorious
Even beside death's silent land.

And in a Beauty I believe, a Beauty God-descended,
By which all forms of life in harmony are blended;
From cloud and sea and shore, from heaven and from earth,
Its ever-youthful shape aye gleams and glances forth.

And when it meets the poet's visionary longing,
Thought's mantle it assumes and feeling's voice,
And in the strains that from his harp are thronging,
It bids each listener's soul rejoice.

And I believe that Death the spirit's life can slay not,
The darkness of the grave its course divine will stay no ;
But when the day-gleam breaks on our sepulchral night,
We reach our final goal, the Father's Land of Light.
When sets the sun of earth, when end its strife and sorrow,
Then dawns for us a higher heavenly day,
And in the blaze of God's transcendent morrow
To ransomed souls we wing our way!

Who that has seen it can ever forget that loveliest of the palaces of Sweden, that gem of Lake Mälar's largest and most beautiful island—Drottningholm ; round which cluster so many royal memories—memories of its original founder, John the Third's Catholic spouse, Katharina Jagellon; of its second founder in its present form, Hedvig Eleonora, widow of Charles the Tenth ; of Adolf Fredrik, Louisa Ulrica, Gustaf III., and Oscar, the father of the present monarch ? It is thus that King Carl bids his "Autumn Adieu to Drottningholm :"

The lovely summer sun farewell is saying
To Scandinavia, and his golden ray,
That late at even on the clouds was playing,
No longer blesses our brief northern day ;
And wood and field that formerly extended
In emerald glory 'neath the heaven's blue,
Have with their verdure autumn-yellow blended,
And in the groves the birds are silent too.

How gratefully my spirit yet reposes
Upon the summer's vanished light and life,—
The time when heaven itself on earth discloses,
And peace transcendent follows winter's strife ;
When all the flowers their fragrant tribute render
To Him who called them into beauty bright,
And, turning to the sun, His emblem, tender
Obedience to the holy laws of light.

But, ah! how perishing is earthly glory ;
How fast are earthly smiles exchanged for tears!
Such is the nature of our human story
In its sad progress onwards through the years.
But still in memory serene and sober,
Let mortals store the sunshine of the past,—
Then, o'er the darkest day of dark October,
A light from former summers will be cast.

And so I think, when now farewell I bid thee,
Thou fairest pearl that lies on Mälar strand!
Deep in my spirit have I henceforth hid thee,
Though fate expel me to some distant land :
To thee shall I be drawn when grief is shrouding,
With night-like curtain, all my present hours ;
And through the shadows then around me crowding,
Will gleam the recollection of thy bowers.

Farewell, ye fields and valleys, groves and mountains,
Where Flora sat in splendour as a queen!
Where fairies, by the verge of moonlit fountains,
Danced in a circle on the pasture green!
Thou reed-crowned shore, whose Spirit of the Water
His harp was striking in the wavelet blue;
Thou wood, whose brook, the hilly torrent's daughter,
Its thread of silver through the pine-stems drew!

Farewell, thou starry eve, that threw a shimmer
So often on the lake in which I rowed,—
Foiling my *downward* vision with thy glimmer,
Yet *upward* pointing to the throne of God!
Have thanks for all the happiness supernal
Thou didst awake to life within my breast,
While o'er me bent thy mighty arch eternal,
The shining symbol of all placid rest!

Adieu, sweet region! From my heart I borrow
The words thus moulded into farewell song;
Thy memory shall banish every sorrow,
And make the winter night less dull and long.
Mid autumn's clouds thy summer I remember,
O Drottningholm! to me for aye the same;
Still sunny in the winter-bound December,
While Peace's lilies cluster round thy name.

We may also quote the simple, but touching, lines addressed to Beckaskog, another favourite country residence of the royal poet:—

Here once more I stand! At last inhaling
Free the fragrance of my groves again;
And I feel the future now is veiling
Peaceful hours that still for me remain.

All I see recalls the period perished,—
Billows blue, and pathway through the dale;
While the flowers, like faithful comrades cherished,
Friendship old renew, and bid me hail.

As before, the green hill-side is bending
O'er the meadow its flower-crested brow;
From the wood the beech-tree is extending,
Glad to welcome me, its verdant bough.

Peace, where'er I look, my spirit blesses,
Calmly beats my heart at her command;
All, in lovely pictures, me addresses,—
And *that* speech how well I understand!

But, without referring at greater length to the minor pieces in these volumes,—some of which, such as the brief songs that form a considerable portion of their contents, are well worthy of attentive consideration,—we wish, before we close, to say a single word with reference to what may be styled the political significance of the King of Sweden's poetry. No one who reads his writings can fail to perceive his intense sympathy with everything distinctively Scandinavian, and that his ideal seems to be the resuscitation of the old energetic, nay even warlike spirit of the North, in a new form adapted to the necessities and requirements of the present age. In some of his poems he bitterly bewails the lack of that ancient spirit,

and expresses ardent longings for its revival. Take, as a specimen, the following lines from the stanzas entitled *Fordom* (Former Days):—

Asa rune-words
Still are left us,
Rock-engraven,
Moss embedded,
Like a Saga
Scarce believed in
By the newer
Sons of time.
Shall the vigour
Of our Northland
Ne'er awaken
From her caverns
Forest-crowned?
Shall the falchion,
As in ages
That have perished,
Never welcome
Hostile blade,
Never sing its
Song of triumph,
Or of death?
To the poet
No response
Is there given?

Take us rather
In thy bosom,
Darkest night!
Hero-shadows,
Step ye forth
From the tombs
Where in silence
Ye have slumbered!
Tell the present
Race of weaklings,
How ye battled,
Bled and suffered,
In defending
Land and freedom,
In transmitting
Deeds of valour
To the ages,—
Which immortal
As the starry
Host of heaven,
Shall for ever
Gleam resplendent
Through the thickest
Mists of time!
We may haply
Yet awaken
From our slumber,
Gather round the
Ancient banners,
Your world-famous
Footsteps follow,
Battle as is
Meet for heroes,
Live and labour,
Die like men!

Stronger language still is employed by King Carl in other passages, as, for instance, in the striking lines in which he prays that the—

North may waken
Afresh for battle-morn arrayed,
To carve new runes, all deep and ruddy,
On Time with her ancestral blade,—
That, though the strife be long and bloody,
Her debt to honour may be paid.

Now all this, as we have already hinted, is not without a certain measure of political significance. It is a fact well known to those persons who have attentively considered, during the last few years, the politics of the North of Europe, that at the time of the late Danish-German war, King Carl's sympathies were thoroughly enlisted in behalf of Denmark, and that had he not been compelled, by the restraints imposed on a constitutional sovereign, to yield to other influences, he would most willingly, by force of arms, have aided the Danish people. There can be no doubt that he inherits at least a portion of his illustrious grandsire's military aspirations, and that if a day of deadly peril should dawn for the Scandinavian North, he would welcome it the reverse of reluctantly as the means of awaking the spirit of its ancient valour, and uniting the three Scandinavian peoples in bonds of closer brotherhood to encounter the common foe, from whatever quarter that foe might arrive. As indicating, then, the views and tendencies of the present Swedish ruler, these poems have unquestionably a certain import of their own,—an import not a little interesting at the present period. However, it is with King Carl, not as a politician, but as a poet, that we have now mainly to do; and so let us conclude by expressing the hope that he may long continue to add to the reputation which, in the latter capacity, he has already gained.

"Oh, how very kind you are, Miss Childersleigh."

Against Time.

CHAPTER X.

The Calumet goes round among the Childersleighs.

WHILST he occupied himself with Hemprigge, first in sketching out the design of their Company, afterwards in constructing and elaborating its machinery, Hugh found that each succeeding day it engrossed more of his thoughts. This was the more natural that he knew its success must be the surest panacea for all and any of his troubles, a long step towards the realization of each and all of his dreams. Yet, with his many business pre-occupations, he found leisure to spare for other things, and, indeed, it was an essential part of the scheme that he should continue to play his part in society. After City hours, and with director-hunting over for the day, he was far from leading the life of a hermit. But all the time there was a something weighing on his mind, and that was the means of replacing himself on a friendly footing at "The Cedars." After the circumstances in which he had last parted from its inmates, the question was one more easy to start than to solve. His latest interviews with Sir Basil, indeed, troubled him but little, and it would have cost him nothing to walk into the establishment in Lombard Street, and beard the old banker in his den with a friendly morning call. But the recollection of the fit of folly that had cast him at Maude's feet in a posture so ridiculous, humiliated him still as keenly as when he left her; when it crossed his mind the bare remembrance made him wince and shudder. The penalty of that passing abdication of reason and *savoir vivre* was a lasting access of morbid *mauvaise honte*. At the very thought of meeting Maude again, his cheeks glowed like a bashful schoolboy's, who thinks he has betrayed to the middle-aged idol of his affections the admiration with which he is overcharged. Each morning he rose in the resolution to drive to Hampstead; each hour of the day brought its engagements, and a decent pretext for deferring the call he longed, yet feared, to make.

How long he might have stood shivering over the plunge it is impossible to say, but a happy chance came to precipitate it. We have spoken before of Captain Childersleigh, Sir Basil's eldest son and heir, who had been down shooting in Scotland at the time of his relation's funeral. Since then the grouse had packed, organized a regular service of pickets, and, now rising in long brown lines, they skimmed the heather half a mile before the muzzles of the breech-loaders. The occupation of the dogs was gone, and, had it not been for the mountain hares the sportsmen were fain to fall back upon, the tail of gillies, the ponies, and the panniers might just as well have been left at home. The chance of taking some lone misanthrope of a grousecock at an advantage was barely enough to repay the toils of the day, and so, for that and other reasons, George Childersleigh, devoted to sport as he was, had torn himself away from it and come up to town.

Hugh had been the object of his admiration ever since the two had been cast together as boys—admiration none the less sincere that it had always been tempered with a touch of awe. Hugh fully returned the liking, but a little of the old patronage that George used to receive as an honour would still, in spite of him, peep out, from time to time, in his manner. Most men would have done the same thing, and Hugh accepted all the deference the other offered him, took him at something below his own very modest self-valuation, and condescended to, and not unfrequently trespassed upon, his unfailing good-humour and easy nature. Having reached Euston Square by the morning express, George did what he had often done before, and drove to the "Albany" to ask for bath and breakfast. As his arrival had been unannounced, his appearance was a surprise to Hugh; but George's face expressed the greater astonishment when he found his host, at that very early hour, already dressed for the day, and seated at the breakfast-table.

"Why, Hugh, this is quite a new idea of yours. You must have a wonderful constitution if you find it none the worse for those late suppers just before going to bed."

"Delighted to see you, George," said Hugh, rising to shake him cordially by the hand, for welcome as the Hussar always was to him, it may be imagined he was never more pleased to see him than now. "If you want to know all about it, sit down and eat, and put off your toilette. I know you'll object to the programme, but it's no great hardship, once in a way, for a man who went through the mutiny, and I've an appointment at 10.30 that won't keep. Sams will find you a chop or something, I daresay, and meantime you can go to work on the cold salmon."

"Thanks, Hugh; I am not particular, as you know, but if there's one thing repels me more than salmon it's chops: so if you tell Sams to forage for something else, I shall be obliged to you. Had it not been for one and the other I believe I should have stayed another week in Scotland, for although the grouse had packed, there were some woodcocks already lying about in the corries, and I never saw such a year for ptarmigan. But

we rang the changes on mutton and salmon six days in the seven, and now black-faced sheep are become as rare as wolves at Killoden. Nothing to be had but those infernal Cheviots."

"Black-faced or Cheviot, you seem to have thriven on them. You look your work all over, and I could have sworn you came into the room in a rush of Highland air from Strathgrumble."

"It does credit to your imagination then, for I was forced to travel from Carlisle in a carriage hermetically sealed. But pending Sams' arrangements, will you impart the mystery of the nine-o'clock breakfast, and tell me what you have been doing with yourself all this time? I almost feared you must have gone out of town. Since the old lady's funeral Maude hasn't said a word about you in her letters."

Hugh, of a sudden, became exceedingly pressing in his attentions to his guest, while he gained some seconds of hurried reflection, which decided him to take him into his confidence. So plunging *in medias res*, he gave a brief sketch of pretty nearly all that had passed since his return to England, binding George over to secrecy as to the then incomplete arrangements for the Company, and suppressing, it is needless to say, all mention of the little scene in the garden at "The Cedars."

"Well," rejoined George, when he had heard him to the end, "you've done just the sort of thing I should have expected of you, and I wish you all manner of success. To tell the truth, I thought there might be some coolness between you and my people, and then I fought shy of condoling with you about that abominable freak of the old woman's, till I knew how you took it. It was an awful facer, to be sure, and I should have written to tell you that, next to yourself, no one could feel it more than I did, only I thought you ought to take that for granted, and perhaps the least said was soonest mended. So I made up my mind to wait a bit and then run up to town and see you; and, in short, that had perhaps nearly as much to do with my movements as the grouse and the mutton."

"You're an excellent fellow, George," said Hugh, stretching out his hand; "but, as you see, the blow has fallen, and I'm not a bit the worse. On the contrary, I never felt in harder condition,—mind and body."

"So I'm delighted to see; but, after all, I'm not sorry to be here, for I don't suppose you care to quarrel with my father?"

"Very far from it, and depend on it, it will be no fault of mine, if we don't cry quits, and let bygones be bygones."

"All right then; only leave it to me. Maude shall send you an invitation to dinner forthwith, and you'll come back to us on the old footing, just as if nothing had happened. It will be a great relief to my father, that I can answer for. I have no doubt he deeply regrets anything disagreeable he may have said, but I suppose you don't hold to hearing him tell you so?"

As may be supposed, Hugh gladly jumped at a proposal that so entirely tallied with his wishes. George was as good as his word. Next day Mr. Childersleigh received from Maude a friendly if formal note, and

the following evening arriving at "The Cedars" rather late, and finding one or two strangers to break the awkwardness of a family gathering, he got over the long-dreaded interview easily enough. Maude, to outward seeming unruffled, welcomed him as the frank pleasant hostess. Her father, looking and feeling rather ashamed of his late outbreaks, now that his first disappointment had spent itself, strove to atone them by an unwontedly demonstrative cordiality. Yet, with it all, Hugh felt that, permanently impoverished as the banker believed him to be, he scarcely stood on his former footing with his host. Purkiss assisted at the banquet of reconciliation with more than his habitual taciturnity. For the moment the favourite brother had his father's ear, and in the intermittent war waged in the household between the powers of good and evil, Oromasdes was for the time in the ascendant. So he bided his opportunity, with a gleam of cheerful confidence lightening his sullen meditations, as he assured himself that some new folly of Hugh's must sooner or later play into his hands.

Hugh had purposely outstayed his fellow-guests—who had taken early leave, as was the practice on similar occasions of the habitués of "The Cedars." Sir Basil, who had no clue to his intentions or plans, had scrupulously avoided inquiring into them. He had a vague notion that in the future he might possibly give Hugh a helping hand towards something, but in the meantime his dominant idea was to take care that he committed himself unnecessarily to nothing. Hugh surmised and quite appreciated his motives, and determined, as a step towards more easy relations, to give a hint that, read by the light of coming events, might pass for a partial confidence. So, following up some remark, he added in an indifferent tone of voice,—

"And, by the way, I forget if I mentioned it, but I intend domesticating myself in Harley Street."

That morning he had taken George into his confidence as we know, but the faces of the others expressed astonishment in their different degrees—Sir Basil's, perhaps, in the superlative.

"Settle in Harley Street, but how—why—— ?" Sir Basil stammered, hesitated and stopped; he felt it would be perilous every way to touch on the very delicate subject of Hugh's ways and means.

"You mean to say, papa," said Maude, coming to the rescue, "that you should have thought Mr. Childersleigh's bright rooms in the 'Albany' would be so much more pleasant than that dull old house; and so should I, I must confess."

At the same time, she succeeded but ill in concealing her own interest and curiosity in an announcement which, as she felt instinctively, implied some momentous decision.

"So they are in one way," rejoined Hugh; "but then the more extensive accommodation happens to suit my present circumstances better: so, albeit a good deal against the grain, I have decided on the move." He smiled in his sleeve to see how thoroughly the double meaning conveyed in the allusion to his circumstances mystified his listeners.

"I'm sure we shall all be extremely glad to have you settled among us. I only hope you're acting for the best," proceeded Sir Basil, but once more pulling up sharply, as he caught himself reverting involuntarily to the compromising tone of the guardian.

"I have very little doubt of it, I assure you, Sir Basil, but time will show."

"By the way, then, you will want to get rid of your rooms," broke in George. "As the other house is standing waiting for you, you may as well turn out at once, I suppose, and as good luck will have it, I know a man—Basset of ours—who has just sold out and is looking about for quarters. He is nearly as rich as Monte Christo and quite as impetuous, and if you'll only make way for him, he'll draw you a cheque for anything you like without bargaining. Shall I bring him to you?"

"Many thanks, George, I wish you would. But I can't go at once. Mr. Basset may have them, say, in a couple of months."

"That's no manner of use; Basset's sure to have suited himself long before," responded George, shaking his head, but not attempting to argue the point. He knew well by experience that when Hugh's mind was made up to an apparently foolish thing, it was generally for some reason perfectly satisfactory to himself, and was not to be shaken by others.

Sir Basil's face was eloquent of profound disgust, but he said nothing until Hugh had taken leave. Then he broke out—

"What's bred in the bone, you see. It's the old story. As recklessly improvident as his father, and nothing will ever cure him. It's some wild crotchet of his, this move into Harley Street; but the keeping on his rooms, and refusing such an offer as he will never have again, is the very madness of prodigality."

"I make little question you will find yourself the sufferer by the arrangement in the long run, sir," interposed Purkiss, pleasantly. "Evidently Hugh has made up his mind to stick by his relations as long as ever they will stick by him."

"I am sure you for one had never any great reason to complain of being over-troubled with him, Purkiss," retorted George; "and I'll answer for it, whatever may happen, he never dreams of taxing your generosity."

"Take care he does not make an experiment on yours, before you see the last of him, George. He'll be a fool if he does not, that I will say for him."

With which parting shot Purkiss retired for the night, following his father, and leaving George alone with his sister.

"Mr. Childersleigh's whole conduct is a mystery to *me*, I confess, George," she began; "and I don't wonder it puzzles and vexes my father. I don't profess to know what he means by going to live in Harley Street, although, if I am not very much mistaken, you do; and it does seem strange that, when money must be an object, he should refuse to let your friend have his rooms for the sake of staying in them a month or two longer."

"You're a sharp observer, Maude, when it pleases you to set your wits to work on a subject that interests you," answered her brother, laughing and looking at her, till she gave up the attempt to brazen it out, and turned away in some confusion. "Yes, I do know why he goes to Harley Street, although I am bound over to silence, but a day or two more will gratify your curiosity, so take that for your comfort. As for the other, like you, I can but guess."

"But you do guess?"

"Well! knowing nothing whatever but something of the circumstances and something of Hugh, I should say it can by no possibility be any reason personal to himself that makes a sensible man like him act as he is acting. There can be nothing whatever to prevent his leaving the 'Albany,' so the difficulty, if there is one, must be in Harley Street. He happened to tell me he should do nothing to the house or the furniture in the meantime, so there can be no hitch about that. Should you not say it may be the presence of Miss Winter that embarrasses him? He can't well go into the house while she stays in it. He won't turn her out. So he sits down quietly under a heavy loss he can ill afford, and waits perforce till she or some one else helps him out of his difficulty. Wouldn't that be Hugh all over, I ask you, Maude?"

"It's very possible you are right, George," rejoined Maude, meditatively; "and I've a very great mind to drive into Harley Street to-morrow. Indeed it was thoughtless of me not to have gone before; that poor girl must be wretchedly desolate."

"Better late than never, Maude, and I don't think you could possibly do a kinder action. Lucy Winter must be all abroad, and if she is Hugh's difficulty, who can help him out of it as a woman can?"

"I've put matters in train, and some good must surely come of it," was his comfortable reflection as he walked upstairs. "But I should very much like to know why Maude has taken to speaking so properly of 'Mr. Childersleigh' all of a sudden."

CHAPTER XI.

Miss Winter loses a Home and finds a Friend.

Lucy Winter had, indeed, been desolate enough—desolate in the desolation that is aggravated by uncongenial society. Old Miss Childersleigh had picked her up not only an orphan but a waif, a child whose nearest relations were so far removed that they could scarcely be reasonably expected to come out of their way to look after her. Any promptings of charity or conscience that may have troubled them, were stifled when they came to hear that she had been claimed and retrieved by this wealthy old woman. Half envying the girl her luck, half distrusting the caprices of her protectress, they thought it the safer plan to assume she was

provided for permanently; and, on that understanding, to wash their hands of her in case things should chance to turn out differently. If they had heard of Miss Childersleigh's death, doubtless the same prudence recommended reticence, while they were yet in ignorance of the state of their young relative's fortunes. In any case no messages of condolence or offers of aid had come to Lucy. There she had sat, moping in the solitude of her room, like some wretch isolated in an inundation, who, look where he will, sees nothing but the black, blank, hopeless waste of waters that keeps threatening him on his lonely perch. Long an automaton in a household that revolved by clockwork in its monotonous routine, she had never been trained to think or suffered to act for herself. Now despair was her natural refuge from a state of things that would have tried the strength of a much more self-reliant character, and each feeble attempt she made at conjuring up something like a prospect, ended generally in a hearty fit of crying; while, as her courage ebbed with her spirits, these fits became more frequent and more violent.

Life had never been very bright to her, and they were dreams rather than realities she had to regret. She felt in her wretchedness that if she could only dissolve away in her own tears, and vanish out of existence in a painless death, it would be far the pleasantest way out of her troubles. But then a despatch like that evidently demanded unlimited and undisturbed licence of grief, and the energetic Mrs. Parkyns had a genius for rousing people a bit, as she was pleased to express it. She was continually sweeping into the room in a borrasca of bombazine; and in their diabolical although unintentional ingenuity, her briefest sentences acted as spells to set all the finer sensibilities on edge. Her nature was a kind-hearted one at bottom; for the first day or so she had been passably tolerant, and she might have remained so had she ever been in the way of giving herself time to think. But she had never been gifted with overmuch patience; and compelled to assume with Miss Childersleigh a virtue that was none of hers, she very naturally hastened to indemnify herself for the fretting penance now that circumstances had made her her own mistress again. Lucy's tears fell like oil on the flame of her temper, and she blazed up before she knew she was getting angry. Her old jealousy of the girl would revive, fed by the obvious shrinking from her fiery companionship. Excesses of language were regularly followed by fits of remorse that sent her back repentant, only to explode again and repeat the offences she regretted.

"I know I'm hot, Miss Lucy, and I'm sorry I said what I did; but then it's enough to try the temper of a cherubim to see you sobbing and crying, and never heeding a bit what I say. Lord bless me! now there you are at it again; and what for, I can't for the very life of me imagine. I've no patience with people that set up for finer feelings than other people. I should be ashamed, if I were you, to be always crying because she didn't leave you better off, and so I tell you; and there you are like a lady with your 70*l.* a year, while I, who have toiled and moiled all these

years——I'll just give you a bit of my mind while I'm about it, Miss Lucy. And there I go again, but to be sure you're enough to provoke the very angels." And Parkyns, in a violent effort upon herself, would force down on her sides the arms she had stuck akimbo, screw up her lips upon the rush of her eloquence, and tear herself half-choking out of the room.

But if Parkyns was little of a comfort to Lucy, she shrunk still more from Hooker. This was the more ungrateful and unaccountable, that the whole manner of that demure domestic had softened into a demonstrative tenderness, and become redolent of an ostentatious consideration for her. It was unreasoning, doubtless; but in a state of mind like hers, reason abdicates its seat, while fanciful sorrows fall as heavily as real ones, and thus her growing dread of encounters with the butler made her life one perpetual shudder. But there is a providence that tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and she had at least the comfort of having in the bedroom, that was patent to Parkyns, a sanctuary sacred from Hooker. At first she made her descents from it in fear and trembling to the dining-room to partake her solitary meals, where the viands were poisoned by the presence of her bugbear, who, in his versatile conversation, stooped his intelligence to hers, and waited upon her with affectionate patronage. At last the nervous horror with which she looked forward to these formidable occasions had sent her to bed with symptoms not at all unlike the heralds of a grave illness. However, a night's repose, with the prospect of a day's relief, comparatively restored her; and next morning she was roused and swept out of bed under the threat of a visitation from Dr. Pillington. She would willingly have asked leave to breakfast with Parkyns, but that lady and Lucy's *bête noire* took their meals together. So, pale and nervous, she waited till she knew her own had long been laid, and believing her enemy must be wearied of waiting for her, slunk down on tiptoe that she might snatch a morsel in comparative comfort.

So noiselessly, indeed, did she glide downstairs that she was absolutely unheard by Hooker, who, with his hands under his coat-tails—the picture of a well-fed citizen who lives at home at ease—was contemplatively looking over the window-blinds at such paralysed life as stagnates in Harley Street. At the sight and the disappointment the poor girl started, and the tears that were always brimming up ran fairly over. She made a stealthy movement as if to slip back again unperceived, then stopped hesitatingly, resting her hand on the table. It shook so violently that the rattling of the china made Hooker turn. In a moment he was by her side, looking with profound solicitude in her face, overwhelming her with tender inquiries after her health, officiously bustling over her breakfast arrangements, and volunteering a variety of obtrusive little offices.

"Ah, Miss Lucy!" he began, with a sentimental air that sat but awkwardly on him, "it goes to my very heart to be sure to see you mope like this. I've watched you, you know, ever since the day they brought you here, till I've come to look on you—if you'll let me say it—quite as a

child of my own. You would hardly believe now how I've felt for you sometimes when she would be down upon you."

"Miss Childersleigh was always very good to me, Hooker," answered Lucy. Her voice trembled in agitation and a little anger as well, and, on the whole, she rather welcomed an observation she was constrained to resent.

"Far be it from me to speak in anything but the highest terms of the departed one, Miss Lucy, or of a mistress I always loved and esteemed. Nothing could be so far from my thoughts. I should scorn myself for the action were I only capable of it," insisted Hooker, with injured and impressive solemnity.

"I am quite sure of it, Hooker," Lucy hastened to explain; a little frightened after her fluttering display of temerity, and disposed to be conciliatory.

"I was certain you could not misunderstand me, Miss Lucy: we have known each other much too long for that, I hope. But I only wish I could persuade you of the real interest I take in you. Ah! I'm an old man now, but I might be of some use to you yet if you would only look upon me as your well-wisher."

In his honest warmth he took in his own the little hand that was crumbling away at the cold toast in default of resolution to go out in search of the butter. Lucy jerked it back instinctively before the pulpy fingers had well closed on it; but apparently neither offended nor disconcerted by the candid vivacity of the action, he proceeded,—

"Pardon my speaking out, Miss Lucy, but the plain truth is that you are left here quite alone, with no one in the world to advise you" —the tears that had been trembling in the eyelids began to fall fast— "and not a soul to tell you what is the best thing to do. It isn't to be expected you should know yourself, and if I make so bold as to speak to you, it's because I'm quite sure you don't want to be in any one's way, and because, as I happen to be aware, you are putting out other people who have plans of their own."

Hooker waited and Lucy sobbed.

"You can't stay on here, as you must see yourself," he proceeded slowly, dropping the words deliberately into her ears one by one. "The house is Mr. Childersleigh's now, and he means to use it; but if he did not, a house of Mr. Childersleigh's is not the place where I should like to see any young lady I cared about. People will talk, you know."

As it chanced, at that moment Lucy had in her pocket a note from Mr. Childersleigh himself, in which, assuring her he had no present intention of occupying the house, and that he intended Mrs. Parkyns to remain in it in the meantime as his housekeeper, he begged her to use it just as long as she pleased. Moreover, he reminded her of his promise to be of service to her, and repeated the assurance that few things would make him more happy than her showing him how to redeem it.

Lucy said nothing of all this to Hooker, but it flashed upon her that he might be only speaking the truth in telling her she was an obstacle in

Mr. Childersleigh's way, and as she grew more despondent about herself, she felt she ought perhaps to be grateful to her tormentor.

"So, Miss Lucy, as I may mention to you in confidence, my opinion of Mr. Childersleigh is such that I have come to the conclusion I should be by no means justified in staying on with him myself."

"How dare you abuse Mr. Childersleigh behind his back?" Lucy broke in, almost fiercely, turning like an aggravated fawn on an old grey hyæna. "How dare you say such things of him, when you know him as well as I do to be kindness itself?"

"Kind enough, and sometimes perhaps rather too kind," retorted Hooker, biting his lips. "But I should be the last person to abuse Mr. Childersleigh and the first to defend him, and if I speak out now, you may be sure it is not because I like doing it. Perhaps you might agree with me if I could venture to tell you more; after all, he's no worse, I daresay, than a great many other gentlemen, and a good deal better than some."

"Thank you, but I won't hear you tell me anything more—not one word." And Lucy fluttered up from perhaps the most miserable meal she had ever sat down to.

"Only one moment, Miss, please," said Hooker, talking fast and precipitating himself desperately into a proposal he had meant to lead up to gently. For he had come beforehand to the conclusion that if not made at once, circumstances might occur to prevent its being made at all. "One moment, I beg. I don't really know why we should go on talking of Mr. Childersleigh: for, once out of his sight, be quite sure he'd never spare a thought either to you or me. What I began by saying was that you must leave this house sooner or later, and that my humble opinion was the sooner the better. Now I don't know if you've any idea of where you are to go, or what you mean to do?"

He waited for the answer, which he knew as well as she did would never come.

"And if you have no plans, whatever is to become of a young lady born and brought up like you? Perhaps you may have no money either, and depend on it nothing of that little annuity of yours will come to you for heaven knows how long——"

At this allusion to her literally penniless condition, Lucy, with an impatient toss of her head, shied from the coarse hand that touched her so roughly, and made another movement towards the door.

"Well, Miss Lucy, but you must look all that in the face. I'm an old man, and I see before you the troubles you can know nothing of. If I speak at all, it's only because I would wish to see you spared them. All I can do for you, I offer to do; I put my very best at your disposal, and I can do no more. I've put by a snug bit of money in my day, and I've got, I'm glad to say, as comfortable a cottage down Camberwell way as you'd wish to see. My sister lives there now; she's always been used to the very best of society, been for years own lady to her Grace the Duchess

of Connaught; and, in short, it would be both a pride and a pleasure to me, Miss Lucy, if you'd consent to move out there at once and take time to look quietly about you. The longer you choose to stay with us, the more welcome we'll make you."

This most unexpected and hospitable proposal increased Lucy's pitiable embarrassment a hundredfold. Her dislike of Hooker had steadily deepened in her talk with him, and now, just as it had grown to loathing, he heaped coals of fire upon her head. Helpless as her condition was, she felt at once that his invitation did not admit of a moment's reflection, that to accept it was an absolute impossibility. Yet her remorse at being unable to feel even the commonest gratitude made it seem the more terrible to hurt him by rejecting kindness so disinterested. She grew redder and redder, hotter and hotter, as she rapidly rehearsed forms of refusal, till at last her words bolted forth in as awkward a shape as they could well have taken, and in sheer desperation she blurted out, as she rushed past him,—

"Oh, no, thank you, Hooker. You're very kind indeed, I'm sure; very kind; but I can't—no, I couldn't—oh, not for the whole world."

If Hooker did look rather annoyed as his eyes followed her in her retreat, can we wonder at it? There could hardly have been a more ungracious refusal of a generous and disinterested offer.

Lucy fled up to her room and locked herself in. Where all Parkyns' vigorous remonstrances had failed, Hooker's plain speaking had succeeded. She did rouse herself, and now that a decision seemed forced on her, she tried hard to think seriously. They are never very easy, first attempts of the kind. The limp mind, utterly unaccustomed to discipline, will go straggling away from its point, indulging itself in the old purposeless lamentations. She had not got much farther than the assuring herself for the thousandth time that she was the most unhappy of girls, and that she would give all she had or hoped, for a friend she could confide in or consult, when she was startled by a thundering double-knock at the door below. It woke the slumbering echoes all over the silent house, and they kept mouthing the sounds backwards and forwards among them as if once disturbed they would never go to sleep again. Even in the depths of her trouble, perhaps in some vague hope of a way out of it, Lucy's curiosity was excited by the unaccustomed arrival.

She looked over her blind and caught a glimpse of the roof of a brougham and the crown of a coachman's hat. She trembled all over; could it be this terrible Mr. Childersleigh, the friendly Hooker had spoken so darkly of, come on a visit to his house, and if so, whatever was she to say to him? Then she heard the butler's well-known foot-fall mounting the stairs, and a moment after, the tap of his well-padded knuckles on her door. She went to open it, shuddering at the glimpse of the swollen eyes, washed-out cheeks, and red-tipped nose she caught in the glass.

"It's Miss Childersleigh, Miss Lucy; Miss Maude from Hampstead:

she asked to see you, but I told her how very unwell you had been, and said I rather feared you might not be able to come down to her. So if I was you, I wouldn't exert yourself to do it; there's not the slightest occasion."

"Oh, thank you, Hooker," exclaimed Lucy, for once unfeignedly thankful; "if you're sure she wouldn't be annoyed, tell her that I really am ill; that I have a very bad headache indeed. But be sure you say how much obliged I am to her."

"Oh, yes, Miss Lucy, you may quite depend upon me. I'll make it all right, you trust me." And Hooker withdrew well pleased to announce to Miss Childersleigh, that Miss Winter was lying down in her room with a severe headache; that she was utterly unequal to seeing any one, but sent Miss Childersleigh her very grateful duty.

"Poor child!" said Miss Childersleigh, "her head must be bad indeed—wandering, I should think, if that was her message. So she sent me her grateful duty?" and she laid a marked emphasis on the last words.

"Well, Miss Maude," hesitated Mr. Hooker, rather taken aback, "she said that or something like that."

"Thank you. But, you see, as you have evidently forgotten her words, it is just possible you may have mistaken her meaning. I think I'll go upstairs."

"But I do assure you, Miss,—you've no idea how very bad she is."

"You heard me say I should go up, did you not? Will you show me her room, or must I find it for myself?" And Hooker, fain to obey, ushered the way accordingly, voluble in apologies.

Miss Childersleigh's voice had changed a good deal when she softly appealed to Lucy to open, and when the two girls stood face to face the real concern she showed was the best apology for her importunity.

"I won't make apologies for taking your room by storm in this way, my dear Miss Winter," she began; "if I did, I should have to go back and ask pardon for not having come in search of you long before, and for that I frankly confess I have not a word to say; I can only throw myself on your mercy."

On the rare occasions when Lucy had seen her visitor before, they had barely exchanged a dozen of words. She had been in the habit of wondering at her from a distance, oppressed by her magnificent toilettes, and still more by the imperturbable self-possession she opposed to the *brusqueries* of the late Miss Childersleigh. Now she scarcely recognized her in the quiet dress and quieter manner. There was something too in Maude's face that assured her of sympathy, and after the uncongenial company she had been thrown with of late, sympathy was what she languished for. So she did perhaps the best thing she could have done in the circumstances, and broke down in one of those bursts of tears of hers.

Maude was touched, and the mute appeal was flattering to her stronger

nature. She reproached herself with her dilatoriness as being greatly to blame for Lucy's misery, and inwardly resolved to atone for it, and, for the moment at any rate, take the other under her wing. Gushing girls and feminine sentiment she detested: consequently she was by no means rich in female friends, yet somehow next moment her arm was round Lucy, and she was whispering in her ear words that meant little in themselves, but which were perhaps none the less comforting on that account. Ere long, Lucy was unfolding to the unwonted sensation of having some one warm to her, and had become talkative and almost cheerful over her griefs. Only as she brought her history down to the incidents of the hour before, and the painful colloquy with Hooker, her face clouded again; she had nearly forgotten her present dilemma in the very excitement of explaining things to her new friend.

"So I must make up my mind what I am to do with myself. I knew, of course, that I couldn't stay on here, but I kept putting off thinking about it. Mr. Childersleigh has been very good; how good I scarcely knew till Hooker told me, but his kindness is only a reason the more for removing myself out of his way."

"Yes, I think with you, dear; it will be better on all accounts that you don't stay on here, and much pleasanter for yourself. No wonder you look ill; what astonishes me is that you have not moped and worried yourself to death days ago. 'The Cedars' are not very gay, it's true, but I think I can answer for it, you'll find our house more lively than this one; at all events we'll all try our best to make you like it. So you'll come to me for a long visit, won't you? and then we shall have time to talk things quietly over."

"Oh, how very kind you are, Miss Childersleigh," gasped Lucy, her face becoming instantaneously radiant; "but I couldn't think——"

"Call me Maude, to begin with, Lucy, do please; we're relations, you know, although neither of us seem to have remembered it, and I intend we shall be friends too. You must forgive if you can't forget the shameful way we've all left you to yourself through this dismal time. It was only thoughtlessness, believe me. Come you must, and you really can't help yourself, for it's your only excuse for refusing Mr. Hooker. Why he ever asked you I can't conceive, but I suppose we must take it for granted he meant well: I shall try to set him down in future as one of those unlucky individuals whose manner is against them, but who are far better than they seem. But I see the very mention of his invitation has decided you to accept mine, so you may as well pack up forthwith, and save me the trouble of coming back for you. We'll have Mrs. Parkyns up at once and one of the maids."

In a marvellously short space of time, Lucy was exchanging really regretful farewells with Parkyns, and, reassured by the presence of Maude, had shaken hands with Hooker, with many thanks for his invitation, and a profusion of apologies for declining it. Hooker appeared hurt, and a good deal put out as well, but all that did not prevent his pressing on Miss

Winter a variety of paternal attentions. In person he saw her boxes charged on a hack cab, viciously twisting the ear of the buttons as he lifted him inside it, and solemnly committed them to his charge. Then he closed the brougham door upon the two young ladies with a stately curtsey, and in his valedictory speech took the liberty of wishing Miss Lucy well, and of beseeching Miss Maude to permit him, as an old servant of her family, to come and pay her his humble duty at "The Cedars."

CHAPTER XII.

The General Meeting.

That was the golden age, when, like Pallas Athene, or like Cytherœa rising from the foam, Companies sprang into being in the full pride of their wisdom and beauty, with intuitive experience and a profusion of witching smiles at the service of all comers. It took little then but a Board and a prospectus, some mahogany and a good deal of plate-glass, to make an institution, and the Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey had all these and much more to boot. It was none of your temporary booths shot up fungus-like in the heart of the City Vanity Fair: booths run up of materials picked up anywhere and draped in gaudy calico and tinsel to hide their rottenness from the public. In the pride of its characteristic oriental architecture, the Crédit Foncier reared itself like Abdu-y-rahman's famous mosque, upon massy columns contributed from every clime—Ottoman porphyry, Hellenic marble, Scottish granite, freestone, sandstone, and Kentish rag. The City pillars, most critically scrutinized by competent judges, as being quarried nearest home, were solid enough, as all the City knew. Their bases were seated the deeper, that years and former panics had heaped around them the wrecks of many a fallen house. Now the business was full six months old too, and in those days businesses were not only born into their prime, but they lived fast. The Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey had come to be looked on as rather a venerable institution, and its Governor, Mr. Childersleigh, was respected as an old City man.

Long ere now it had moved out of its temporary offices into a palace in Lothbury, whose vast portals and Brobdingnagian windows would have dwarfed to pigmies a race of giant customers. The mansion had been reared regardless of all cost by a speculative building company, on a site bartered for a carpeting of bank-notes. Its founders had given their architect *carte blanche*, merely stipulating that a fabulous number of Peterhead granite columns should be introduced somehow or other along the Italian façade. The upper row of these were diverted from their more natural purposes, and consecrated to the support of a heterogeneous colony of statues, among which, however, Childersleigh's more fastidious taste had insisted on putting some sort of order. Towering high above the rest, her

features wreathed in benignant smiles, a colossal figure of Plenty was emptying out a cornucopiaful of the choicest gifts and blessings on the floods of lucky clients that passed surging out and in below.

Scoffers said the embodied allegory was pregnant with warning, had the crowd had but the wit and grace to profit by it:—that the presiding deities of joint-stock schemes generally did empty their baskets in premature premiums and a couple or so of excessive dividends, so that not only was there nothing left to come in the future, but they were actually driven to keep calling on their unlucky protégés to replenish their waste.

But few were prejudiced enough to deny that the Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey was an exception, or sufficiently rash enough to aver that its most conspicuous emblem was inappropriate. Its managing men had gone to work from the first to help themselves, and had done all that skill and energy could do to make things safe for their shareholders. Short as its career had been, already it had established a marvellous connection, and yet they laboured on at extending it, as anxiously as if all were still to do. The Company found the advantage of being directed by gentlemen, for Hemprigge's shrewdness landed him where Childersleigh had started from. They took it for a maxim that civility was in no case thrown away, and even applicants who came to them on bootless errands often felt more pleasantly towards the courteous managers in Lothbury than to the underbred *nouveaux riches* at the head of rival establishments, with whom they had been more successful—men who had the knack of offending all comers as they swaggered out their little hour on the piles of money-bags they had filched from a credulous public.

"Punctual as usual, Mr. Childersleigh," exclaimed Hemprigge, as one morning his hansom happened to pull up before the steps in Lothbury, just as Mr. Childersleigh appeared round the corner from Moorgate Street. Mr. Childersleigh had taken up his abode in the house he had succeeded to provisionally, and patronized methodically one particular morning train on the Metropolitan Railway. Hemprigge had long ago ceased to make wry faces at the extreme regularity of his principal's attendance. He was not a man to waste his time crying over what he could do nothing to prevent; perhaps he consoled himself with the reflections that if Hugh was less of a puppet than he had intended him to be, he was more of a prop; that the business was all the sounder, and that if he himself had less control than he liked, he had less labour and anxiety too.

"Always punctual. I do not believe there is a man in the City, filling a position like yours, who works himself half so hard."

"So you tell me often, Hemprigge; and I've often reminded you that our position wouldn't be what it is if both of us did not keep our shoulders close to the wheel. Besides, few men work with such a spur as I; as you very well know."

"True enough, Mr. Childersleigh; and now that you've covered so much of the course, what do you say to my prophecies of your beating time, and landing yourself a winner?"

"That I don't mean to throw away a chance by over-confidence. Be sure of that."

"But to look back on the ground we've gone over from the morning of our general meeting—things promise well, don't they? Confess it now?"

Hemprigge looked at him more earnestly than the matter-of-course air with which he put the question would have seemed to warrant, as if anxious to justify or contradict, by hearing Childersleigh's impressions, some internal misgivings of his own.

"It's much too early for anything more substantial than hope; but this I can say, that I can't recall anything to regret; that I don't see where we could possibly have done much better; that, instead of buying our experience dear, we've been paid pretty handsomely for acquiring it; and, finally, let me add, if we have kept on straight and steady, it has been in very great measure owing to you."

Hemprigge smiled, but, as it seemed, with an effort, and you would have almost said he appeared to find the compliment an unpalatable one. Yet it was evident enough it was paid in all sincerity, and it came from a man who rarely dealt in such things, and who had it in his power to follow up flattering words with deeds.

"You really have no reason whatever to thank me, although, next to yourself, I am more interested in your success than any one can be. But, as you are aware, all my own hopes and interests are bound up with those of the Company."

"Of course I know all that, although I must confess, in my selfishness, I sometimes forget that any of you all has a concern in it but myself. But if in helping your own interests you advance mine, you must let me be grateful all the same."

"If that's your idea, I'm sure I have no objection. Quite the reverse. But I must repeat, once for all, if we are to bandy compliments, that if Miss Childersleigh's money had unluckily dropped straight into your mouth, there would have been a magnificent financier spoiled, and all the world would have known of Mr. Childersleigh would have been his happy talents for spending. Here you are, a City man barely six months old, about to fill the chair at a great meeting of City men, and not only unprimed and unprompted, but knowing, I dare to say, far more of your subject than any man who listens to you. The meeting must go off pleasantly, that's a thing of course, and, upon my word, it's almost a pity. If any one were to tackle you, how you would drag him after you out of his depth, and then get him down and drown him in deep water."

"I devoutly hope I may never have the chance," rejoined Childersleigh, laughing. "But really the water's so clear and so shallow that the most shortsighted of the shareholders may see to the bottom."

"Yes, that's the best of our management. It has been so beautifully straightforward it throws people out, and things are so plain that they puzzle the knowing ones. We really have the purest of consciences, and nothing whatever to conceal; the more they pump the Board, the

higher they send the shares. Very few companies in our position can say as much; and now I can afford candidly to make the admission that you were absolutely right when you insisted on your own way in all that sort of thing."

"The day may come," the astute Mr. Hemprigge reflected, "when he'll be forced to be less strait-laced; and then it may be wealth untold to us to be able to tell the public anything we please, on the strength of our reputation for candour."

"The policy has answered well," Hugh rejoined. "The list of shareholders was a good one to begin with, and it has weeded itself day by day, till now I venture to think no kindred establishment can show a stronger."

"Quite true; and, as I observe, some very shy birds indeed are beginning to come after us—dropping down on the shares, and picking up a few stray ones now and again, before going in for a surfeit."

"So I see. For my part, I wonder they don't get scared away by the premium?"

"It makes them shilly-shally a little, perhaps, but it tempts them too. By the way, do you know who our latest acquisition is?—a very great friend of your own."

"A friend of mine; that doesn't help me much towards guessing. All my old friends are joining us one after another; those of them who have any money left, at least. Besides, I've really no time to spare for riddles on a busy day like this."

"Purkiss Childersleigh, then. He actually committed himself to ten of our shares the other day."

"Nonsense, Hemprigge; you can't mean that? Why, Sir Basil would cut him off with a shilling, and ostracize him from Lombard Street for life if he only knew it. He hates us and all our works like poison. I never knew him miss a chance of having a quiet fling at us."

"He never does; and yet, if Purkiss has bought, you may be quite sure his father's in the secret. Sir Basil's prejudices are pretty strong, but not so strong as to stand in the way of his interests, and he may begin to think it will be a question of interest with him one day or other. Our account is not a bad one now, and it will be much better worth the having later. At any rate, it's a fact that Mr. Purkiss has done us the honour of becoming our associate, and Mr. Purkiss has the credit of knowing as well as most men on which side his bread is buttered."

"It's a good sign, Hemprigge, I grant you, a very good sign, if we wanted more encouragement, and in any case it would delight me to make Sir Basil recant. But I must be gone to look over the letters. Au revoir till one o'clock."

As may be supposed, Purkiss had arrived at his resolution through much mental tribulation. He had seen Company after Company founded and floated to a premium without ever dreaming of embarking in them. Instinct and education, rather than reason, had given him a profound distrust

of all new-fangled schemes, of joint-stock enterprise, limited liability, and over-speculative investments in general. When the Turkish Credit Company issued its prospectus, and threw open its doors, he had at first kindly contributed his very utmost to advertise it, by posting its Governor everywhere as a scapegrace, proclaiming and magnifying his poverty, and decrying his antecedents. For all that, however, when it came to Sir Basil's ears, he had been sternly rebuked, and Sir Basil, as senior partner, if not as parent, was not a man to be trifled with. As we know, Sir Basil, although he sneered at the Company himself, held the family name in too deep reverence to endure to see it needlessly splashed, even though he was apprehensive that Hugh might be dragging it through the mire. Hugh had aggravated his former offences rather than condoned them by this perverse way of seeking his living, yet, as he had made up his mind to adopt it, for every reason the banker desired he should have fair play.

So Purkiss, forced to close his mouth, had opened his eyes and ears, hoping against his convictions—for he was constrained to own the Board a good one—that the scheme might be stifled in its birth, and anxiously watching for any evil signs that might reassure him. On the contrary, he saw it thrive and go on thriving, and flourish beyond his most gloomy anticipations. Its shares mounted steadily to eighty per cent. of a premium; still, if the wealth that was rolling in had flowed out into unknown reservoirs, Purkiss could have resigned himself and borne it. But he realized its full success in watching the growing prosperity of a man he envied and disliked, and his moments of extremest depression were haunted by the radiant phantom of Hugh, doubly enriched by his dip in the City Pactolus, and by the golden flood of Miss Childersleigh's hoarded wealth.

He was troubled with the feeling that he should never rid himself of his remorse, were the Company to turn out a triumph, were he to miss the chance of lightening the blow of seeing Hugh a millionaire by having insisted upon sharing in his winnings and drawing something handsome for himself from the same source. He was full late as he was, that was the worst of it. The original shareholders were swinging fairly away on the free tide of their prosperity, and buying so much later, he should at best be floundering in their backwater. But better late than never, and before all it was essential to obtain his father's assent as a preliminary to this disposal of his economies. Accordingly, he took advantage of an opportunity when left *tête-à-tête* with the old gentleman after dinner. Sir Basil had wheeled his chair round towards the blaze, and drawn the decanter of port over to his elbow.

"Nothing new to-day, Purkiss, I think?"

"Nothing I know of, sir. The shares of that precious Company of Hugh's are up another pound I see, but then they're always going up, worse luck. It's the first half year, and already they talk of a ten per cent. dividend—a bonus."

"A ten per cent dividend and a bonus! I tell you what it is,

Purkiss, it's perfectly disgraceful the unprincipled competition the old houses have to struggle with in these terrible times."

"It's a shocking state of things, sir, there's no doubt of it."

"But it must end in a blow-up sooner or later, there can be no doubt of that, and, for my part, I say the sooner it comes the better. What right have they to go shaking confidence and laying mines to be sprung upon us?"

"Heaven send them a smash, and a speedy one," devoutly responded Purkiss in a genuine burst of feeling. Then, recollecting what was his cue for the moment, he checked himself and resumed:

"Yes, there can be no doubt the ruck must go, but I must say it looks to me very much indeed as if a few of the pick of them may stand."

"Nonsense, Purkiss," retorted his father, peevishly; "I'm an older man than you, and I've seen a good deal of this sort of thing before. Only give them rope enough, and the fools who guide them are sure to hang themselves in time, take my word for it."

"To be sure, sir, no one ought to know better than you. There's no sounder head than yours in the City, I am glad to think, or Childersleigh would not have been what you have made it. But forgive me if I can't quite agree with you here. Of course in the very first panic most of these new houses must go down by the run, but there's no denying that confounded Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey looks very like lasting. Richborough himself was saying so yesterday. I do believe that fellow Hugh has some of your own business talent, sir, confound him."

"I shouldn't wonder. I must say it looks rather like it," assented Sir Basil, complacently.

"I fear it does look like it. At all events, if his Company should go on as it has begun, the time might come when he would be able to do us a good turn."

Sir Basil stared at his son, shocked and electrified by the profane suggestion.

"Childersleigh's helped by an infernal Turkish house of yesterday—a house run up in the last few weeks—directed by a dissipated boy!"

"They are strange times, as you said just now, and upon my word—for we must look to Childersleigh's before everything else—upon my word, I must repeat again, it would scarcely surprise me."

The upshot of a long conversation, which utterly spoiled the flavour of Sir Basil's port, was his declining to compromise himself by anything more definite than a general prediction of an evil end to the Crédit Foncier of Turkey in particular, kindred establishments in general, and the country that fostered and petted them. At the same time, his son and junior partner was given to understand that he had *carte blanche* to exercise his own discretion as to any little investments he might contemplate, and that he might play his own cards as he pleased. So, after many internal

qualms, Purkiss concluded, as the Americans say, to eat humble pie, and tremblingly approached his fingers to the flames of speculation.

Sir Basil would have seen still greater cause to deplore the growing corruption of the age, had he assisted at the general meeting of the objectionable Company, presided over by his kinsman. The great hall in the palace in Lothbury, designed with a special view to gatherings of the sort, was crowded with rank, wealth, and respectability, all hurrying emulously along the road to fortune. On a raised dais at one end, aloft in awful state, sat the Governor, relatively nearly as much of a stripling as Philip's godlike son, apparently like him in a very fair way soon to sigh for a new commercial world to conquer. His crimson chair was elevated above those of his astute peers : that in which lolled the Deputy-Governor, Lord Rushbrook, being a compromise between the dignity of the one and the other. At a corner of the long table, which fenced them off from their assembled constituents, sat the Managing Director, flashing his keen black eyes round the faces in the hall, and passing a cataract of papers and memoranda through his lissome fingers.

There was Houssein Pacha, the purple fez and the golden tassel; Sir Ralph Palliser with his dignified grey head and high-set, somewhat supercilious features; Schwartzschild's thick-bridged swarthy nose, and Mavromichalis' delicately-cut olive one; there was Rolfganger with his brown beard and blue eyes, and Budger with his stubby grizzled bristles; Delacour with his lisp and simper and lavender gloves; McAlpine with the broad Scotch burr he brought to all foreign tongues, whether English or Hindustani; and last, but very far from least, the English contingent from the City, who, looking for the most part steady-going warm men of business, gave great confidence to the meeting, but slight hold to the brush of the portrait-painter.

Amid enthusiastic cheering, Mr. Childersleigh got on his legs to address himself to a sea of beaming faces. "He stood there," he began, "after a six months' probation, for himself and those he had the pleasure to act with and the honour to preside among, to render an account of their stewardship. From the cordial, he might almost say the affectionate reception that greeted him, he hoped he might assume it to be the sentiment of the meeting, that the important interests confided to his colleagues and himself, had not suffered in their hands." (Renewed and prolonged cheering.) "If he knew anything of himself, he was not an over-sanguine man—as a simple question of business he felt it would be gross imprudence to excite hopes that might possibly prove fallacious; but this he would say, and no less could he say in common candour, that the more they looked back on their past, the more promise would they gather for their future. The field before them was a boundless one, they had taken the first step that was proverbially so difficult, and he must say it appeared to him, from the strides with which they were moving onwards, that, without knowing it, they had drawn on a pair of seven-leagued boots." (Much laughter.)

"He could not venture to ask them to look at this board, but he would recommend them to cast their eyes round that meeting. Was not their brotherhood one to which any man might be proud of belonging? For the credit that was the breath of their nostils, the essential principle of their life, how did that stand with the world? But six short months had passed since they had launched their infant company, and now each 10*l.* embarked in it was fetching 18*l.* in open market. Before their vessel had well cleared the port, their venture had begun to return them profits, and already their officers had the legitimate satisfaction of announcing an interim dividend of ten per cent. The dividend might have been a higher one, but the directors had determined to take 'caution' for their watchword. To one thing he would pledge himself, that every shilling of that dividend had been honestly and discreetly earned." (Tremendous applause.) "He used the word 'discreetly' advisedly, because, as he trusted and believed, the directors had steered the happy mean between the timid and the rash; while giving a wide berth to anything like reckless speculation, they had made it their study to avoid the shoals of excessive caution, on which so many well-meaning but slow-going, old-fashioned establishments lay stranded. Fortunately the sea they sailed was one where prudence itself need not content itself with trifling profits, and all the time they had the gratification of knowing their mission was as much philanthropical as practical." (Much enthusiasm.) "Above all let the shareholders never forget this, that there was nothing their directors courted more than publicity. A certain discretion must be conceded them indeed, and in justice to the feelings of their customers they could not invariably condescend on names. But with that reservation, what he said to them was this, and he knew in saying it he spoke the sentiment of his colleagues: 'Treat us with the same frankness we show towards you, and come and tell us candidly when you think we are going wrong.'" (Great cheering and "We will.")

Then Mr. Childersleigh, having favoured his audience with a few figures, and acknowledged in the handsomest terms the individual services of some of his colleagues whom he singled out for mention, excused himself for encroaching any longer on the valuable time of the meeting, and resumed his seat amid a regular ovation.

Some formal questions were asked, and the adoption of the report was moved and seconded amidst irrepressible enthusiasm. The Rev. Dr. Silke Reynardson had been pitched on as a representative shareholder, as at once holding a large stake in the Company and being entirely unconnected with trade, to move the vote of thanks to the Governor, the Deputy-Governor, and the Board. In the course of a long life, the Rev. Doctor had amassed a handsome independence, chiefly as a popular preacher, and if the Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey only yielded him as rich returns as the pathos and fervour of his sacred eloquence had done, he would have no reason to complain. His was the rare gift of drawing congregations and tears; of stirring feelings to their profoundest depths, till the fair hearers

found their lace-bordered pocket-handkerchiefs all too scanty, and saw in them a home-borne parable of the unsatisfying character of the vanities of this wicked world.

Now as it hung on his honeyed lips, or was hurried along by his fervid action, his entranced City audience, to most of whom seconds were precious, ceased to drag at their watch-chains; they even listened with tolerant sympathy when he diverged into a parenthetical analysis of his personal feelings and an exposition of the unselfish reasons which had made a self-denying pillar of religion hazard the imputation of a worldly dalliance with mammon. As to methods of money-getting, every man's conscience, as he told them, must be his individual law; yet if any one of them found little time, among manifold engagements, to check off, as he might say, the promptings of that inward monitor of his, why, they were fortunate in having so reliable a guide as their admirable and excellent Governor. He could tell them—laying his hand on his heart—that he believed Mr. Childersleigh a man as conscientious as he was honourable, and as honourable as he had proved himself able.

The harmonious proceedings were drawing to a close, when Lord Rushbrook chanced to catch Mr. Hemprigge's eye, and the appealing expression in Mr. Hemprigge's face. At the preliminary meeting of officials, Mr. Hemprigge had, much to his lordship's annoyance, made a great point of his addressing the meeting, with a view to the adorning of the report designed for general circulation. His lordship had at first laughingly, then impatiently, parried the entreaties that addressed themselves alternately to his public spirit and private interests. He had listened to the Doctor's glowing praises of his cousin with a twinkle in his eyes that somewhat disconcerted the eloquent divine, whose look naturally sought the face of the man of highest rank on the platform. Now a happy thought seemed to strike him, and, rising to his feet with infinite promptitude, he craved, with great presence of mind, and in the name of the unimpeachable credit of the Company, the indulgence of the meeting. He would detain them, he pledged himself, but a minute or two, while he entreated them to discharge a debt of common justice. Charmed by the unlooked-for privilege of hearing his lordship, a respectful hush dominated the meeting. When he rose to speak it had been on the point of breaking up, with the noisy demonstrations of a parcel of enfranchised schoolboys.

The Deputy-Governor then proceeded to say, in easy and unembarrassed language, that he felt he should imperfectly discharge the duties the shareholders had honoured him by entrusting to him, if he hesitated before their dispersion to remind them of a something that seemed to him to have been most unaccountably forgotten. For himself, he was eager to pay an honest, if inadequate, tribute to one—he did not wish to condescend to invidious distinctions, or resort to those comparisons that are proverbially odious—to one of the most active and intelligent members of their *personnel*. Then, with an air of utter unconsciousness, and a delicate

mimicry, which some might suspect but few could have sworn to, he modelled a fervent eulogy on the Managing Director, upon the Rev. Dr. Reynardson's eloquent praises of the Governor.

"It may have been my fortune," said his lordship, "to have enjoyed more frequent opportunities than perhaps any gentleman present of appreciating Mr. Hemprigge in his private dealings, and it is my pride to bear testimony to the unstinted interest he has taken himself and succeeded in exacting of others in any transactions where I have had to do with him. But you have all had opportunities of seeing him as the man of business. I would rather speak of him simply as the man. Mr. Hemprigge, gentlemen, is eminently fitted to take a prominent part in a mission like ours, where, as my eloquent relative in the chair has so well observed, philanthropy and commerce travel hand in hand." (A smothered anathema from the smiling Governor, stifled in the prevailing applause.) "For Mr. Hemprigge, while eminently practical, and gifted with business talents of a very rare order, has, during his brief and unobtrusive career, done as much towards relieving the necessities of his fellows as any man I am acquainted with. But this, you will say, is beside the question; and I own my feelings may for the moment have got the upper hand." ("They do you honour, my lord!" from a benevolent and excited-looking old gentleman in the front seats.) "In moving, then, the vote of thanks which, in my opinion, Mr. Hemprigge has so well merited of us, I will merely content myself with adding that, in the unlikely event of the temporary absence of our assiduous Governor, sensitive shareholders, in search of moral counsels and example, may be assured of finding a guide, a philosopher, and a friend in our managing director. Mr. Hemprigge, gentlemen, is a man at least as shrewd as he is honest, and to the full as honest as he is unselfish."

Three gentlemen at least had sat on thorns throughout his lordship's speech, and these were the Governor, Dr. Silke Reynardson, and Mr. Hemprigge. The first heard it in a cold perspiration, bitterly repenting the hour when he had recruited this reckless guerilla for high command, in abject alarm as to what he might say next, and wondering how soon the audience might find him out and shout him down. When Lord Rushbrook at last resumed his seat, Hugh gave vent to a deep sigh of relief, and venturing to steal a look around, could hardly believe the assurance of eyes and ears that the speech had been far from the least successful of the meeting.

"May we be delivered from all temptation," he muttered, piously. "If shareholders stand that, they'll stand anything."

As for Hemprigge, when he had first caught the import of his lordship's oratory, his face had become radiant, and he had set himself to conning over a little speech of his own, prepared beforehand, against the happy event of its being wanted. As Lord Rushbrook proceeded, his victim's mind settled into a condition compared to which that of Childersleigh was serenity itself. His self-control was considerable, but

with all the resolution he could summon to his aid he could not prevent his inward misery flinging out its shadow on his face.

Fortunately the intelligent witnesses of his martyrdom set his pangs down to the nervous tremors of a man unhabituated to figuring on public platforms before audiences so imposing and distinguished. When he stammered out in broken sentences his profound sense of the honour done him by one who, he was proud to hear, had dignified him with the name of friend, they were only confirmed in that belief, and good-naturedly encouraged the timid *débutant* with their ringing cheers. So even Hemprigge retreated apparently with all the honours of war, and the close of the meeting was to the full as pleasant as its beginning had been.

"Well, Hugh, what did you think of my maiden effort from any platform?" asked Lord Rushbrook, as he unceremoniously entered the Governor's private room after the meeting.

"I'd just as soon not tell you, Rushbrook. I don't often lose my temper, and as I've kept it so long, I'll try and keep it still."

"*Mea culpa, mea culpa.* Upon my soul, Hugh, all joke apart, I came on purpose to tell you that I knew I had behaved abominably, but then think of the temptation. A full quarter of an hour of that sanctimonious old humbug, and the chance of paying off Hemprigge, who sat there robed in his virtue, as if butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. But I'll never do it again, that I swear solemnly, and besides you must remember I was feeling their pulses all the time, ready to pull up the very moment I saw a glimmer of appreciation appear in any of their faces. All's well that ends well, and surely free confession and heartfelt repentance deserve plenary absolution. *A tout péché miséricorde*, especially for a first offence and on so joyful an occasion as this."

"Well, well, Rushbrook, luckily you seem to have done no harm, so for once let bygones be bygones,—the more so, that I for one picked up a good deal from your speech. It gave me the exact measure of the discretion of our Deputy-Governor and the intelligence of the shareholders of the Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey."

THE ARROW WENT UP AT AN ANGLE OF FORTY-FIVE.

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

FEBRUARY, 1870.

Put Yourself in His Place.

CHAPTER XXX.

IN that part of London called "the City" are shady little streets, that look like pleasant retreats from the busy, noisy world; yet are strongholds of business.

One of these contained, and perhaps still contains, a public office full of secrets, some droll, some sad, some terrible. The building had a narrow, insignificant front, but was of great depth, and its south side lighted by large bay windows all stone and plate-glass; and these were open to the sun and air, thanks to a singular neighbour; here, in the heart of the City, was wedged a little rustic church, with its churchyard, whose bright green grass first startled, then soothed and refreshed the eye, in that wilderness of stone; an emerald set in granite: the grass flowed up to the south wall of the "office;" those massive stone windows hung over the graves; the plumed clerks could not look out of window and doubt that all men are mortal: and the article the office sold was Immortality.

It was the Gosshawk Life Insurance.

On a certain afternoon anterior to the Hillsborough scenes last presented, the plumed clerks were all at the south windows, looking at a funeral in the little churchyard, and passing some curious remarks; for know that the deceased was insured in the Gosshawk for nine hundred pounds, and had paid but one premium.

The facts, as far as known, were these. Mr. Richard Martin, a Londoner by birth, but residing in Wales, went up to London to visit his brother. Towards the end of the visit the two Martins went up the river in a boat, with three more friends, and dined at Richmond. They rowed back in the cool of the evening: at starting they were merely jovial; but they stopped at nearly all the public-houses by the water-side, and, by visible gradations, became jolly—uproarious—sang songs—caught crabs. At Vauxhall they got a friendly warning, and laughed at it: under Southwark bridge they ran against an abutment, and were upset in a moment: it was now dusk, and, according to their own account, they all lost sight of each other in the water. One swam ashore in Middlesex, another in Surrey, a third got to the chains of a barge and was taken up much exhausted, and Robert Martin laid hold of the buttress itself, and cried loudly for assistance. They asked anxiously after each other, but their anxiety appeared to subside in an hour or two, when they found there was nobody missing but Richard Martin. Robert told the police it was all right, Dick could swim like a cork. However, next morning he came with a sorrowful face to say his brother had not reappeared, and begged them to drag the river. This was done, and a body found, which the survivors and Mrs. Richard Martin disowned.

The insurance office was informed, and looked into the matter; and Mrs. Martin told their agent, with a flood of tears, she believed her husband had taken that opportunity to desert her, and was not drowned at all. Of course this went to the office directly.

But a fortnight afterwards a body was found in the water, down at Woolwich, entangled in some rushes by the water-side.

Notice was given to all the survivors.

The friends of Robert Martin came, and said the clothes resembled those worn by Richard Martin; but beyond that they could not be positive.

But, when the wife came, she recognized the body at once.

The brother agreed with her; but, on account of the bloated and discoloured condition of the face, asked to have the teeth examined: his poor brother, he said, had a front tooth broken short in two. This broken tooth was soon found; also a pencil-case, and a key, in the pocket of the deceased; these completed the identification.

Up to this moment the conduct of Richard Martin's relatives and friends had been singularly apathetic; but now all was changed: they broke into loud lamentations, and he became the best of husbands, best of men: his lightest words were sacred. Robert Martin now remembered that "poor Dick" had stood and looked into that little churchyard and said, "If you outlive me, Bob, bury me in this spot; father lies here."

So Robert Martin went to the churchwarden for leave to do this last sad office. The churchwarden refused, very properly, but the brother's entreaties, the widow's tears, the tragedy itself, and other influences, extorted at last a reluctant consent, coupled with certain sanatory conditions.

The funeral was conducted unobtrusively, and the grave dug out of sight of the Gosshawk. But of course it could not long escape observation; that is to say, it was seen by the clerks; but the directors and manager were all seated round a great table upstairs absorbed in a vital question, viz. whether or not the Gosshawk should imitate some other companies, and insure against fire as well as death. It was the third and last discussion; the minority against this new operation was small, but obstinate and warm, and the majority so absorbed in bringing them to reason, that nobody went to the window until the vote had passed and the Gosshawk was a Life and Fire Insurance. Then some of the gentlemen rose and stretched their legs, and detected the lugubrious enormity. "Hallo!" cried Mr. Carden, and rang a bell. Edwards, an old clerk, appeared, and, in reply to Mr. Carden, told him it was one of their losses being buried,—Richard Martin.

Mr. Carden said this was an insult to the office, and sent Edwards out to remonstrate.

Edwards soon reappeared with Robert Martin, who represented, with the utmost humility, that it was the wish of the deceased, and they had buried him, as ordered, in three feet of charcoal.

"What, is the ceremony performed?"

"Yes, sir, all but filling in the grave. Come and see the charcoal."

"Hang the charcoal!"

"Well," said a humane but somewhat pompous director, "if the ceremony has gone so far—but, Mr. Martin, this must never recur, charcoal, or no charcoal."

Mr. Martin promised it never should: and was soon after observed in the churchyard urging expedition.

The sad company speedily dispersed, and left nothing to offend nor disgust the Life and Fire Insurance, except a new grave, and a debt of nine hundred pounds to the heirs or assigns of Richard Martin.

Not very far from this churchyard was a public-house; and, in that public-house, a small parlour upstairs, and in that parlour a man, who watched the funeral rites with great interest, but not in a becoming spirit; for his eyes twinkled with the intensest merriment all the time, and at each fresh stage of the mournful business he burst into peals of laughter. Never was any man so thoroughly amused in the City before, at all events in business hours.

Richard Martin's executor waited a decent time, and then presented his claim to the Gosshawk. His brother proved a lien on it for 300*l.*, and the rest went by will to his wife. The Gosshawk paid the money, after the delay accorded by law.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Messrs. Bolt and Little put their heads together, and played a prudent game. They kept the works going for a month, without doing anything novel, except what tended to the health and comfort of their workmen.

But, meantime, they cleared out two adjacent rooms: one was called the studio, the other the experiment room.

In due course they hired a couple of single men from Birmingham to work the machine under lock and key.

Little, with his own hands, effected an aperture in the party-wall, and thus conveyed long saws from his studio to the machine, and received them back ground.

The men were lodged three miles off, were always kept at work half an hour later than the others, and received six pounds per week apiece, on pain of instant dismissal should they breathe a syllable. They did the work of twenty-four men; so, even at that high rate of wages, the profit was surprising. It actually went beyond the inventor's calculation, and he saw himself, at last, on the road to rapid fortune, and, above all, to Grace Carden.

This success excited Bolt's cupidity, and he refused to contract the operation any longer.

Then the partners had a quarrel, and nearly dissolved. However, it ended in Little dismissing his Birmingham hands, and locking up his "Experiment Room," and in Bolt openly devoting another room to the machines: two long, two circular.

These machines coined money, and Bolt chuckled and laughed at his partner's apprehensions, for the space of twenty-one days.

On the twenty-second day, the Saw-grinders' Union, which had been stupefied at first, but had now realized the situation, sent Messrs. Bolt and Little a letter, civil and even humble: it spoke of the new invention as one that, if adopted, would destroy their handicraft, and starve the craftsmen and their families; and expressed an earnest hope that a firm, which had shown so much regard for the health and comfort of the workmen, would not persist in a fatal course, on which they had entered innocently and for want of practical advice.

The partners read this note differently. Bolt saw timidity in it. Little saw a conviction, and a quiet resolution, that foreboded a stern contest.

No reply was sent, and the machines went on coining.

Then came a warning to Little, not violent, but short, and rather grim. Little took it to Bolt and he treated it with contempt.

Two days afterwards the wheel-bands vanished, and the obnoxious machines stood still.

Little was for going to Grotait, to try and come to terms. Bolt declined. He bought new bands, and next day the machines went on again.

This pertinacity soon elicited a curious epistle:

"Messrs. Bolt and Little,—When the blood is in an impure state, brimstone and treacle is applied as a mild purgative; our taking the bands was the mild remedy; but, should the seat of disease not be reached, we shall take away the treacle, and add to the brimstone a necessary quantity of saltpetre and charcoal.

"Tantia Topee."

On receipt of this, Little, who had tasted the last-mentioned drugs, showed such undisguised anxiety, that Bolt sent for Ransome. He came directly, and was closeted with the firm. Bolt handed him the letters, told him the case, and begged leave to put him a question. "Is the police worth anything, or nothing, in this here town?"

"It is worth something, I hope, gentlemen."

"How much, I wonder? Of all the bands that have been stolen, and all the people that have been blown up, and scorched, and vitrioled, and shot at, and shot, by Union men, did ever you and your bobbies nail a single malefactor?"

Now Mr. Ransome was a very tall man, with a handsome dignified head, a long black beard, and pleasant, dignified manners. When short, round, vulgar Mr. Bolt addressed him thus, it really was like a terrier snapping at a Newfoundland dog. Little felt ashamed, and said Mr. Ransome had been only a few months in office in the place. "Thank you, Mr. Little," said the chief constable. "Mr. Bolt, I'll ask you a favour. Meet me at a certain place this evening, and let me reply to your question then and there."

This singular proposal excited some curiosity, and the partners accepted a rendezvous. Ransome came to the minute, and took the partners into the most squalid part of this foul city. At the corner of a narrow street he stopped and gave a low whistle. A policeman in plain clothes came to him directly.

"They are both in the 'Spotted Dog,' sir, with half a dozen more."

"Follow me, and guard the door. Will you come, too, gentlemen?"

The "Spotted Dog" was a low public, with one large room and a sanded floor. Mr. Ransome walked in and left the door open, so that his three companions heard and saw all that passed.

"Holland and Cheetham, you are wanted."

"What for?"

"Wilde's affair. He has come to himself, and given us your names."

On this the two men started up and were making for the door. Ransome whipped before it. "That won't do."

Then there was a loud clatter of rising feet, oaths, threats, and even a knife or two drawn; and, in the midst of it all, the ominous click of a pistol, and then dead silence; for it was Ransome who had produced that weapon. "Come, no nonsense," said he. "Door's guarded, street's guarded, and I'm not to be trifled with."

He then handed his pistol to the officer outside with an order, and, stepping back suddenly, collared Messrs. Holland and Cheetham with one movement, and, with a powerful rush, carried them out of the house in his clutches. Meantime the policeman had whistled, there was a conflux of bobbies, and the culprits were handcuffed and marched off to the Town Hall.

"Five years' penal servitude for that little lot," said Ransome. "And now, Mr. Bolt, I have answered your question to the best of my ability."

"You have answered it like a man. Will you do as much for us?"

"I'll do my best. Let me examine the place, now that none of them are about."

Bolt and Ransome went together, but Little went home; he had an anxiety even more pressing, his mother's declining health. She had taken to pining and fretting, ever since Doctor Amboyne brought the bad news from Cairnhope; and now, instead of soothing and consoling her son, she needed those kind offices from him; and, I am happy to say, she received them. He never spent an evening away from her. Unfortunately he did not succeed in keeping up her spirits, and the sight of her lowered his own.

At this period Grace Carden was unmixed comfort to him; she encouraged him to encroach a little, and visit her twice a week instead of once, and she coaxed him to confide all his troubles to her. He did so; he concealed from his mother that he was at war with the trade again, but he told Grace everything, and her tender sympathy was the balm of his life. She used to put on cheerfulness for his sake, even when she felt it least.

One day, however, he found her less bright than usual, and she showed him an advertisement—Bollinghope house and park for sale; and she was not old enough nor wise enough to disguise from him that this pained her. Some expressions of regret and pity fell from her; that annoyed Henry, and he said, "What is that to us?"

"Nothing to you: but I feel I am the cause. I have not used him well, that's certain."

Henry said, rather cavalierly, that Mr. Coventry was probably selling his house for money, not for love, and (getting angry) that he hoped never to hear the man's name mentioned again.

Grace Carden was a little mortified by his tone, but she governed herself and said sadly, "My idea of love was to be able to tell you every thought of my heart, even where my conscience reproaches me a little. But if you prefer to exclude one topic—and have no fear that it may lead to the exclusion of others——"

They were on the borders of a tiff; but Henry recovered himself and said firmly, "I hope we shall not have a thought unshared one day; but, just for the present, it will be kinder to spare me that one topic."

"Very well, dearest," said Grace. "And, if it had not been for the

advertisement——" she said no more, and the thing passed like a dark cloud between the lovers.

Bollinghope house and park were actually sold that very week; they were purchased, at more than their value, by a wealthy manufacturer: and the proceeds of this sale and the timber sale cleared off all Coventry's mortgages, and left him with a few hundred pounds in cash, and an estate which had not a tree on it, but also had not a debt upon it.

Of course he forfeited, by this stroke, his position as a country gentleman; but that he did not care about, since it was all done with one view, to live comfortably in Paris, far from the intolerable sight of his rival's happiness with the lady he loved.

He bought in at the sale a few heirlooms and articles of furniture—who does not cling, at the last moment, to something of this kind?—and rented a couple of unfurnished rooms in Hillsborough to keep them in. He fixed the day of his departure, arranged his goods, and packed his clothes. Then he got a letter of credit on Paris, and went about the town buying numerous articles of cutlery.

But this last simple act led to strange consequences. He was seen and followed; and in the dead of the evening, as he was cording with his own hands a box containing a few valuables, a heavy step mounted the stair, and there was a rude knock at the door.

Mr. Coventry felt rather uncomfortable, but he said, "Come in."

The door was opened, and there stood Sam Cole.

Coventry received him ill. He looked up from his packing and said, "What on earth do you want, sir?"

But it was not Cole's business to be offended. "Well, sir," said he, "I've been looking out for you some time, and I saw you at our place; so I thought I'd come and tell you a bit o' news."

"What is that?"

"It is about him you know of, begins with a hel."

"Curse him! I don't want to hear about him. I'm leaving the country. Well, what is it?"

"He is wrong with the trade again."

"What is that to me?—Ah!—Sit down, Cole, and tell me."

Cole let him know the case, and assured him that, sooner or later, if threats did not prevail, the Union would go any length.

"Should you be employed?"

"If it was a dangerous job, they'd prefer me."

Mr. Coventry looked at his trunks, and then at Sam Cole. A small voice whispered "Fly." He stifled that warning voice, and told Cole he would stay and watch this affair, and Cole was to report to him whenever anything fresh occurred. From that hour this gentleman led the life of a malefactor, dressed like a workman, and never went out except at night.

Messrs. Bolt and Little were rattened again, and never knew it till morning. This time it was not the bands, but certain axle-nuts and

screws that vanished. The obnoxious machines came to a standstill, and Bolt fumed and cursed. However, at ten o'clock, he and the foreman were invited to the Town Hall, and there they found the missing gear, and the culprit, one of the very workmen employed at high wages on the obnoxious machines.

Ransome had bored a small hole in the ceiling, by means of which this room was watched from above; the man was observed, followed, and nabbed. The property found on him was identified, and the magistrate offered the prisoner a jury, which he declined; then the magistrate dealt with the case summarily, refused to recognize rattening, called the offence "petty larceny," and gave the man six months' prison.

Now as Ransome, for obvious reasons, concealed the means by which this man had been detected, a conviction so mysterious shook that sense of security which ratteners had enjoyed for many years; and the trades began to find that craft had entered the lists with craft.

Unfortunately, those who directed the Saw-grinders' Union thought the existence of the trade at stake, and this minor defeat merely exasperated them.

Little received a letter telling him he was acting worse than Brinsley, who had been shot dead in the Briggate; and asking him, as a practical man, which he thought was likely to die first, he or the Union? "You won't let us live, why should we let you?"

Bolt was threatened in similar style, but he merely handed the missives to Ransome; he never flinched.

Not so Little. He got nervous; and, in a weak moment, let his mother worm out of him that he was at war with the trades again.

This added anxiety to her grief, and she became worse every day.

Then Doctor Amboyne interfered, and, after a certain degree of fencing —which seems inseparable from the practice of medicine—told Henry plainly he feared the very worst if this went on; Mrs. Little was on the brink of jaundice. By his advice Henry took her to Aberystwith in Wales; and, when he had settled her there, went back to his troubles.

To those was now added a desolate home; gone was the noble face, the maternal eye, the soothing voice, the unfathomable love. He never knew all her value till now.

One night, as he sat by himself sad and disconsolate, his servant came to tell him there was a young woman inquiring for Mrs. Little. Henry went out to her, and it was Jael Dence. He invited her in, and told her what had happened. Jael saw his distress, and gave him her womanly sympathy. "And I came to tell her my own trouble," said she, "fie on me."

"Then tell it me, Jael. There, take off your shawl and sit down. They shall make you a cup of tea."

Jael complied, with a slight blush; but as to her trouble, she said it was not worth speaking of in that house.

Henry insisted, however, and she said, "Mine all comes of my sister

marrying that Phil Davis. To tell you the truth I went to church with a heavy heart on account of their both beginning with a D—Dence and Davis; for 'tis an old saying—

> If you change the name and not the letter,
> You change for the worse and not for the better.

Well, sir, it all went wrong somehow. Parson he was South country: and, when his time came to kiss the bride, he stood and looked ever so helpless; and I had to tell him he must kiss her; and even then he stared foolish like a bit before he kissed her, and the poor lass's face getting up and the tear in her eye at being slighted. And that put Patty out for one thing: and then she wouldn't give away the ribbon to the fastest runner—The lads run a hundred yards to the bride, for ribbon and kiss you know—Wasn't the ribbon she grudged, poor wench; but the fastest runner in Cairnhope town is that Will Gibbon, a nasty, ugly, slobbering chap, that was always after her, and Philip jealous of him: so she did for the best, and Will Gibbon safe to win it. But the village lads they didn't see the reason, and took it all to themselves. Was she better than her granddam? and were they worse than their grandsires? They ran on before, and fired the anvil when she passed: just fancy! an affront close to her own door: and, sir, she walked in a doors crying. There was a wedding for you! George the blacksmith was that hurt at their making free with his smithy to affront her, he lifted his arm for the first time, and pretty near killed a couple of them, poor thoughtless bodies. Well, sir, Phil Davis always took a drop, you know, and, instead of mending, he got worse; they live with father, and of course he has only to go to the barrel: old-fashioned farmers like us don't think to spy on the ale. He was so often in liquor, I checked him; but Patty indulged him in everything. By-and-by my lord gets ever so civil to me: 'What next?' said I to myself. One fine evening we are set upstairs at our tea; in he comes drunk, and says many things we had to look at one another and excuse. Presently he tells us all that he has made a mistake: he has wedded Patty, and I'm the one he likes the best. I thought the fool was in jest; but Patty she gave a cry as if a knife had gone through her heart. Then my blood got up in a moment. 'That's an affront to all three,' said I: 'and take your answer, ye drunken sow,' said I. I took him by the scruff of the neck and just turned him out of the room and sent him to the bottom of the stairs headforemost. Then Patty she quarrelled with me; and father he sided with her. And so I gave them my blessing, and told them to send for me in trouble; and I left the house I was born in. It all comes of her changing her name and not her letter." Here a few tears interrupted further comment.

Henry consoled her, and asked her what she was going to do.

She said she did not know; but she had a good bit of money put by, and was not afraid of work, and, in truth, she had come there to ask Mrs. Little's advice, "poor lady. Now don't you mind me, Mr. Henry, your trouble is a deal worse than mine."

"Jael," said he, "you must come here and keep my house till my poor mother is better."

Jael coloured and said, "Nay, that will not do. But if you could find me something to do in your great factory—and I hear you have enemies there; you might as well have a friend right in the middle of them. Eh, but I'd keep my eyes and ears open for you."

Henry appreciated this proposal, and said there were plenty of things she could do; she could hone, she could pack, she could superintend, and keep the girls from gabbling; "that," said he, "is the real thing that keeps them behind the men at work."

So Jael Dence lodged with a female cousin in Hillsborough, and filled a position of trust in the factory of Bolt and Little: she packed, and superintended; and the foreman paid her thirty shillings a week. The first time this was tendered her she said severely, "Is this right, young man?" meaning, "Is it not too much?"

"Oh, you will be raised if you stay with us three months."

"Raised?" said the virtuous rustic! Then, looking loftily round on the other women, "What ever do these factory folk find to grumble at?"

Henry told Grace all about this, and she said, rather eagerly,—"Ah, I am glad of that. You'll have a good watch-dog."

It was a shrewd speech. The young woman soon found out that Little was really in danger, and she was all eyes, and ears, and no tongue.

Yet neither her watchfulness, nor Ransome's, prevailed entirely against the deviltries of the offended Union. Machinery was always breaking down by pure accident; so everybody swore, and nobody believed: the water was all let out of a boiler, and the boiler burst. Bands were no longer taken, but they were cut. And, in short, the works seemed to be under a curse.

And, lest the true origin of all these mishaps should be doubted, each annoyance was followed by an anonymous letter. These were generally sent to Little. A single sentence will indicate the general tone of each.

1. "All these are but friendly warnings, to save your life if possible."

2. "I never give in. I fight to death, and with more craft and duplicity than Bolt and Ransome. They will never save you from me, if you persist. Ask others whether I ever failed to keep my word."

3. "If I but move my finger, you are sent into eternity."

Henry Little's nerve began to give way more and more.

Meantime Cole met Mr. Coventry, and told him what was going on beneath the surface: at the same time he expressed his surprise at the extraordinary forbearance shown by the Union. "Grotait is turning soft, I think. He will not give the word to burn Sebastopol."

"Then do it without him."

Cole shook his head, and said he daren't. But, after some reflection, he said there was a mate of his, who was not so dependent on Grotait: he might be tempted perhaps to do something on his own hook, Little being wrong with the trade, and threatened. "How much would you stand?"

"How far would your friend go?"

"I'll ask him."

Next day Cole walked coolly into the factory at dinner-time, and had a conversation with Hill, one of the workmen, who, he knew, was acting for the Union, and a traitor in his employers' camp. He made Hill a proposal. Hill said it was a very serious thing; he would think of it, and meet him at a certain safe place and tell him.

Cole strolled out of the works, but not unobserved. Jael Dence had made it her business to know every man in the factory by sight, and observing, from a window, a stranger in conversation with Hill, she came down and met Cole at the gate. She started at sight of him: he did not exactly recognize her; but, seeing danger in her eye, took to his heels, and ran for it like a deer: Jael called to some of the men to follow him, but nobody moved. They guessed it was a Union matter. Jael ran to Little, and told him that villain, who had escaped from Raby Hall, had been in the works colloguing with one of the men.

Ransome was sent for, and Cole described to him.

As for Hill, Jael watched him like a cat, from that hour, since a man is known by his friends. She went so far as to follow him home every evening.

Cole got fifty pounds out of Coventry, for Hill, and promised him twenty. For this sum Hill agreed to do Little. But he demanded some little time to become proficient in the weapon he meant to use.

During the interval, events were not idle. A policeman saw a cutler and a disguised gentleman talking together, and told Ransome. He set spies to discover, if possible, what that might mean.

One day, the obnoxious machines were stopped, by an *accident* to the machinery, and Little told Jael this, and said, "Have you a mind to earn five pound a week?"

"Ay, if I could do it honestly."

"Let us see the arm that flung Phil Davis downstairs."

Jael coloured a little, but bared her left arm, at command.

"Good heavens!" cried Little. "What a limb! Why mine is a shrimp compared with it."

"Ay, mine has the bulk, but yours the pith."

"Oh, come, if your left arm did that, what must your right be?"

"Oh," said Jael, "you men do everything with your right hand; but we lasses know no odds. My left is as strong as my right, and both at your service."

"Then come along with me."

He took her into the "Experiment Room," explained the machine to her, gave her a lesson or two; and so simple was the business, that she soon mastered her part of it; and Little, with his coat off, and Jael, with her noble arms bare, ground long saws together secretly; and Little, with Bolt's consent, charged the firm by the gross. He received twenty-four pounds per week, out of which he paid Jael six, in spite of her "How can a lass's work be worth all that?" and similar remonstrances.

Being now once more a workman, and working with this loyal lass so many hours a day, his spirits rose a little, and his nerves began to recover their tone.

But, meantime, Hill was maturing his dark design.

In going home, Little passed through one place he never much liked. It was a longish close, with two sharp rectangular turns.

Since he was threatened by the trade, he never entered this close without looking behind him. He did not much fear an attack in front, being always armed with pistols now.

On a certain night he came to this place as usual, went as far as the first turn, then looked sharply round to see if he was followed; but there was nobody behind except a woman, who was just entering the court. So he went on.

But a little way down this close was a small public-house, and the passage-door was ajar, and a man watching. No sooner was Little out of sight than he emerged, and followed him swiftly on tiptoe.

The man had in his hand a weapon that none but a Hillsborough cutler would have thought of; yet, as usual, it was very fit for the purpose, being noiseless and dangerous, though old-fashioned. It was a long strong bow, all made of yew-tree. The man fitted an arrow to this, and running lightly to the first turn, obtained a full view of Little's retiring figure, not fifteen yards distant.

So well was the place chosen, that he had only to discharge his weapon, and then run back. His victim could never see him.

He took a deliberate aim at Little's back, drew the arrow to the head, and was about to loose it, when a woman's arm was flung round his neck.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Coventry and Cole met that night near a little church.

Hill was to join them, and tell them the result.

Now, as it happens, Little went home rather late that night, so these confederates waited, alternately hoping and fearing, a considerable time.

Presently, something mysterious occurred, that gave them a chill.

An arrow descended, as if from the clouds, and stuck quivering on a grave not ten yards from them. The black and white feathers shone clear in the moonlight.

To Coventry, it seemed as if heaven was retaliating on him.

The more prosaic, but quick-witted cutler, after the first stupefaction, suspected it was the very arrow destined for Little, and said so.

"And heaven flings it back to us," said Coventry, and trembled in every limb.

"Heaven has nought to do in it. The fool has got drunk, and shot it in the air. Anyway, it mustn't stick there to tell tales."

Cole vaulted over the churchyard, drew it out of the grave, and told Coventry to hide it.

"Go you home," said he. "I'll find out what this means."

Hill's unexpected assailant dragged him back so suddenly and violently that the arrow went up at an angle of forty-five, and, as the man loosed the string to defend himself, flew up into the sky, and came down full a hundred yards from the place.

Hill twisted violently round and, dropping the bow, struck the woman in the face with his fist: he had not room to use all his force; yet the blow covered her face with blood. She cried out, but gripped him so tight by both shoulders that he could not strike again, but he kicked her savagely. She screamed, but slipped her arms down and got him tight round the waist. Then he was done for: with one mighty whirl she tore him off his feet in a moment; then dashed herself and him under her to the ground with such ponderous violence, that his head rang loud on the pavement, and he was stunned for a few seconds. Ere he quite recovered she had him turned on his face, and her weighty knee grinding down his shoulders, while her nimble hands whipped off her kerchief and tied his hands behind him in a twinkling.

So quickly was it all done, that by the time Little heard the scrimmage, ascertained it was behind him, and came back to see, she was seated on her prisoner, trembling and crying after her athletic feat, and very little fit to cope with the man if he had not been tied.

Little took her by the hands. "Oh, my poor Jael. What is the matter? Has the blackguard been insulting you?" And, not waiting for an answer, gave him a kick that made him howl again.

"Yes, kill him, the villain! he wanted to murder you. Oh, oh, oh!"

She could say no more, but became hysterical.

Henry supported her tenderly, and wiped the blood from her face: and, as several people came up, and a policeman, he gave the man in charge, on Jael's authority, and he was conveyed to the station accordingly, he and his bow.

They took Jael Dence to a chemist's shop, and gave her cold water and salts: the first thing she did, when she was quite herself, was to

seize Henry Little's hand and kiss it with such a look of joy as brought tears into his eyes.

Then she told her story, and was taken in a cab to the police-office, and repeated her story there.

Then Henry took her to Woodbine Villa, and Grace Carden turned very pale at Henry's danger, though passed: she wept over Jael, and kissed her; and nobody could make enough of her.

Grace Carden looked wistfully at Henry and said, "Oh that I had a strong arm to defend you."

"Oh, Miss Grace," said Jael, "don't you envy me. Go away with him from this wicked, murdering place. That will be a deal better than anything I can do for him."

"Ah, would to heaven I could this minute," said Grace, clinging tenderly to his shoulder. She insisted on going home with him and sharing his peril for once.

Hill was locked up for the night.

In the morning a paper was slipped into his hand. "Say there was no arrow."

He took this hint, and said that he was innocent as a babe of any harm. He had got a bow to repair for a friend, and he went home twanging it, was attacked by a woman, and, in his confusion, struck her once, but did not repeat the blow.

Per contra, Jael Dence distinctly swore there was an arrow, with two white feathers and one black one, and that the prisoner was shooting at Mr. Little. She also swore that she had seen him colloguing with another man, who had been concerned in a former attempt on Mr. Little, and captured, but had escaped from Raby Hall.

On this the magistrate declined to discharge the prisoner; but, as no arrow could be found at present, admitted him to bail, two securities fifty pounds each, which was an indirect way of imprisoning him until the assizes.

This attempt, though unsuccessful in one way, was very effective in another. It shook Henry Little terribly; and the effect was enhanced by an anonymous letter he received, reminding him there were plenty of noiseless weapons. Brinsley had been shot twice, and no sound heard. "When your time comes, you'll never know what hurt you." The sense of a noiseless assassin eternally dogging him preyed on Little's mind and spirits, and, at last, this life on the brink of the grave became so intolerable that he resolved to leave Hillsborough; but not alone.

He called on Grace Carden, pale and agitated.

"Grace," said he, "do you really love me?"

"Oh, Henry! Do I love you?"

"Then save me from this horrible existence. Oh, my love, if you knew what it is to have been a brave man, and to find your courage all oozing away under freezing threats, that you know, by experience, will be followed by some dark, subtle, bloody deed or other. There, they have brought me down to this, that I never go ten steps without looking

behind me, and, when I go round a corner, I turn short, and run back, and wait at the corner to see if an assassin is following me. I tremble at the wind. I start at my own shadow."

Grace threw her arms round his neck, and stopped him with tears and kisses.

"Ah, bless you, my love," he cried, and kissed her fondly. "You pity me—you will save me from this miserable degrading life?"

"Ah, that I will, if I can, my own."

"You can."

"Then tell me how."

"Be my wife—let us go to the United States together. Dearest, my patents are a great success. We are making our fortune, though we risk our lives. In America I could sell these inventions for a large sum, or work them myself at an enormous profit. Be my wife, and let us fly this hellish place together."

"And so I would in a moment; but" (with a deep sigh) "papa would never consent to that."

"Dispense with his consent."

"Oh, Henry; and marry under my father's curse!"

"He would not curse you, if he loves you half as well as I do; and, if he does not, why sacrifice me, and perhaps my life, to him?"

"Henry, for pity's sake, think of some other way. Why this violent haste to get rich? Have a little patience. Mr. Raby will not always be abroad. Oh, pray give up Mr. Bolt, and go quietly on, at peace with these dreadful trades. You know I'll wait all my life for you. I will implore papa to let you visit me oftener. I will do all a faithful loving girl can do to comfort you."

"Ay," said Henry, bitterly, "you will do anything but the one thing I ask."

"Yes, anything but defy my father. He is father and mother both to me. How unfortunate we both are! If you knew what it costs me to deny you anything, if you knew how I long to follow you round the world——"

She choked with emotion, and seemed on the point of yielding after all.

But he said, bitterly, "You long to follow me round the world, and you won't go a twelve-days' voyage with me to save my life. Ah, it is always so. You don't love me as poor Jael Dence loves me. She saved my life without my asking her; but you won't do it when I implore you."

"Henry, my own darling, if any woman on earth loves you better than I do, for God's sake marry her, and let me die to prove I loved you a little."

"Very well," said he, grinding his teeth. "Next week I leave this place with a wife. I give you the first offer, because I love you. I shall give Jael the second, because she loves me."

So then he flung out of the room, and left Grace Carden half fainting on the sofa, and drowned in tears.

But, before he got back to the works, he repented his violence, and his heart yearned for her more than ever.

With that fine sense of justice which belongs to love, he spoke roughly to Jael Dence.

She stared, and said nothing, but watched him furtively, and saw his eyes fill with tears at the picture memory recalled of Grace's pale face and streaming eyes.

She put a few shrewd questions, and, his heart was so full, he could not conceal the main facts, though he suppressed all that bore reference to Jael herself. She took Grace's part, and told him he was all in the wrong; why could not he go to America alone, and sell his patents, and then come back and marry Grace with the money? "Why drag her across the water, to make her quarrel with her father?"

"Why, indeed?" said Henry: "because I'm not the man I was. I have no manhood left. I have not the courage to fight the trades; nor yet the courage to leave the girl I love so dearly."

"Eh, poor lad," said Jael, "thou hast courage enough; but it has been too sore tried, first and last. You have gone through enough to break a man of steel."

She advised him to go and make his submission at once.

He told her she was his guardian angel, and kissed her, in the warmth of his gratitude; and he went back to Woodbine Villa, and asked Grace's forgiveness, and said he would go alone to the States, and come back with plenty of money to satisfy Mr. Carden's prudence, and——

Grace clutched him gently with both hands, as if to hinder him from leaving her. She turned very pale, and said "Oh my heart!"

Then she laid her head on his shoulder, and wept piteously.

He comforted her, and said, "What is it? a voyage of twelve days! And yet I shall never have the courage to bid you good-by."

"Nor I you, my own darling."

Having come to this resolution, he was now seized with a fear that he would be assassinated before he could carry it out: to diminish the chances, he took up his quarters at the factory, and never went out at night. Attached to the works was a small building near the water-side. Jael Dence occupied the second floor of it. He had a camp-bed set up on the first floor, and established a wire communication with the police-office. At the slightest alarm he could ring a bell in Ransome's ear. He also clandestinely unscrewed a little postern door, that his predecessors had closed, and made a key to the lock, so that if he should ever be compelled to go out at night, he might baffle his foes, who would naturally watch the great gate for his exit.

With all this he became very depressed, and moody, and alarmed Doctor Amboyne, who remembered his father's end.

The Doctor advised him to go and see his mother for a day or two; but he shook his head, and declined.

A prisoner detained for want of bail is allowed to communicate with his friends, and Grotait soon let Hill know he was very angry with him for undertaking to do Little without orders. Hill said that the job was given him by Cole, who was Grotait's right-hand man, and Grotait had better bail him, otherwise he might be induced to tell tales.

Grotait let him stay in prison three days, and then sent two householders with the bail.

Hill was discharged, and went home. At dusk, he turned out to find Cole, and tracing him from one public-house to another, at last lighted on him in company with Mr. Coventry.

This set him thinking; however, he held aloof till they parted; and then following Cole, dunned him for his twenty pounds.

Cole gave him five pounds on account. Hill grumbled, and threatened.

Grotait sent for both men, and went into a passion, and threatened to hang them both if they presumed to attack Little's person again in any way. "It is the place I mean to destroy," said Grotait, "not the man."

Cole conveyed this to Coventry, and it discouraged him mightily, and he told Cole he should give it up, and go abroad.

But, soon after this, some pressure or other was brought to bear on Grotait, and Cole, knowing this, went to him, and asked him whether Bolt and Little were to be done or not.

"It is a painful subject," said Grotait.

"It is a matter of life and death to us," said Cole.

"That is true. But mind, the place and not the man."

Cole assented, and then Grotait took him on to a certain bridge, and pointed out the one weak side of Bolt and Little's fortress, and showed him how the engine-chimney could be got at and blown down, and so the works stopped entirely: "And I'll tell you something," said he; "that chimney is built on a bad foundation, and was never very safe; so you have every chance."

Then they chaffered about the price; and, at last, Grotait agreed to give him 20*l.*

Cole went to Coventry, and told him how far Grotait would allow him to go: "but," said he, "20*l.* is not enough. I run an even chance of being hung or lagged."

"Go a step beyond your instructions, and I'll give you a hundred pounds."

"I daren't," said Cole: "unless there was a chance to blow up the place with the man in it." Then, after a moment's reflection, he said: "I hear he sleeps in the works. I must find out where."

Accordingly, he talked over one of the women in the factory, and gained the following information, which he imparted to Mr. Coventry.—

Little lived and slept in a detached building, recently erected, and the young woman, who had overpowered Hill, slept in a room above him. She passed in the works for his sweetheart, and the pair were often locked up together for hours at a time in a room, called the "Experiment Room."

This information took Coventry quite by surprise, and embittered his hatred of Little. While Cole was felicitating him on the situation of the building, he was meditating how to deal his hated rival a stab of another kind.

Cole, however, was single-minded in the matter; and, the next day, he took a boat and drifted slowly down the river, and scanned the place very carefully.

He came at night to Coventry, and told him he thought he might perhaps be able to do the trick, without seeming to defy Grotait's instructions. "But," said he, "it is a very dangerous job. Premises are watched: and, what do you think? they have got wires up now that run over the street to the police-office, and Little can ring a bell in Ransome's room, and bring the bobbies across with a rush in a moment. It isn't as it was under the old chief constable; this one's not to be bought nor blinded. I must risk a halter."

"You shall have fifty pounds more."

"You are a gentleman, sir. I should like to have it in hard sovereigns. I'm afraid of notes. They get traced somehow."

"You shall have it all in sovereigns."

"I want a little in advance, to buy the materials. They are costly, especially the fulminating silver."

Coventry gave him ten sovereigns, and they parted with the understanding that Cole should endeavour to blow up the premises on some night when Little was in them, and special arrangements were made to secure this.

Henry Little and Grace Carden received, each of them, an anonymous letter, on the same day."

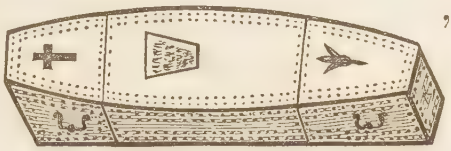
Grace Carden's ran thus:—

"I CAN'T abide to see a young lady made a fool of by a villain. Mr. Little have got his miss here: they dote on each other. She lives in the works, and so do he, ever since she came, which he usen't afore. They are in one room, as many as eight hours at a stretch, and that room always locked. It is the talk of all the girls. It is nought to me, but I thought it right you should know, for it is quite a scandal. She is a strapping country lass, with a queerish name. This comes from a stranger, but a well-wisher.

"FAIR PLAY."

The letter to Henry Little was as follows :—

"THE reason of so many warnings, and ne'er a blow, you had friends in the trade. But you have worn them out. You are a doomed man. Prepare to meet your God.

"  "

This was the last straw on the camel's back, as the saying is.

He just ground it in his hand, and then he began to act.

He set to work, packed up models, and despatched them by train : clothes ditto, and wrote a long letter to his mother.

Next day he was busy writing and arranging papers till the afternoon. Then he called on Grace, as related, and returned to the works about six o'clock ; he ordered a cup of tea at seven, which Jael brought him. She found him busy writing letters, and one of these was addressed to Grace Carden.

That was all she saw of him that night ; for she went to bed early ; and she was a sound sleeper.

It was nine o'clock of this same evening.

Mr. Coventry, disguised in a beard, was walking up and down a certain street opposite the great door of the works.

He had already walked and lounged about two hours. At last Cole joined him for a moment and whispered in a tone full of meaning, "Will it do now ?"

Coventry's teeth chattered together as he replied, "Yes ; now is the time."

"Got the money ready ?"

"Yes."

"Let us see it."

"When you have done what you promised me."

"That very moment ?"

"That very moment."

"Then I'll tell you what you must do. In about an hour go on the new bridge, and I'll come to you ; and, before I've come to you many minutes, you'll see summut and hear summut that will make a noise in Hillsbro', and, perhaps, get us both into trouble."

"Not if you are as dexterous as others have been."

"Others ! I was in all those jobs. But this is the queerest. I go to it as if I was going to a halter. No matter, a man can but die once."

And, with these words, he left him and went softly down to the water-side. There, in the shadow of the new bridge, lay a little boat, and in it a light-jointed ladder, a small hamper, and a basket of tools. The row-locks were covered with tow, and the oars made no noise whatever, except the scarce audible dip in the dark stream. It soon emerged below the bridge like a black spider crawling down the stream, and melted out of sight the more rapidly that a slight fog was rising.

Cole rowed softly past the works, and observed a very faint light in Little's room. He thought it prudent to wait till this should be extinguished, but it was not extinguished. Here was an unexpected delay.

However, the fog thickened a little, and this encouraged him to venture; he beached the boat very gently on the muddy shore, and began his work, looking up every now and then at that pale light, and ready to fly at the first alarm.

He took out of the boat a large varnish-can, which he had filled with gunpowder, and wrapped tightly round with wire, and also with a sash-line; this can was perforated at the side, and a strong tube screwed tightly into it; the tube protruded twelve inches from the can in shape of an S: by means of this a slow-burning fuse was connected with the powder; some yards of this fuse were wrapt loosely round the can.

Cole crept softly to the engine-chimney, and, groping about for the right place, laid the can in the engine bottom, and uncoiled the fuse. He took out of his pocket some small pieces of tile, and laid the fuse dry on these.

Then he gave a sigh of relief, and crept back to the boat.

Horrible as the action was, he had done all this without much fear, and with no remorse, for he was used to this sort of work; but now he had to commit a new crime, and with new and terrible materials, which he had never handled in the way of crime before.

He had in his boat a substance so dangerous, that he had made a nest of soft cotton for the receptacle which held it; and, when the boat touched the shore, light as the contact was, he quaked lest his imprisoned giant-devil should go off and blow him to atoms.

He put off touching it till the last moment. He got his jointed ladder, set it very softly underneath the window where the feeble gas-light was, and felt about with his hands for the grating he had observed when he first reconnoitred the premises from the river. He found it, but it was so high that he had to reach a little, and the position was awkward for working.

The problem was how to remove one of those bars, and so admit his infernal machine; it was about the shape and size of an ostrich's egg.

It must be done without noise, for the room above him was Little's, and Little, he knew, had a wire by means of which he could summon Ransome and the police in the turn of a hand.

The cold of the night, and the now present danger, made Cole shiver all over, and he paused.

But he began again, and, taking out a fine steel saw highly tempered, proceeded to saw the iron slowly and gently, ready at the first alarm to spring from his ladder and run away.

With all his caution, steel grated against steel and made too much noise in the stilly night. He desisted. He felt about and found the grating was let into wood, not stone; he oiled the saw and it cut the wood like butter; he made two cuts like a capital V, and a bar of the grating came loose; he did the same thing above, and the bar came out.

Cole now descended the ladder, and prepared for the greatest danger of all. He took from its receptacle the little metal box lined with glazed paper, which contained the fulminating silver and its fuse; and, holding it as gently as possible, went and mounted the ladder again, putting his foot down as softly as a cat.

But he was getting colder and colder, and, at this unfortunate moment, he remembered that, when he was a lad, a man had been destroyed by fulminating silver, quite a small quantity, in a plate over which he was leaning; yet the poor wretch's limbs had been found in different places; and he himself had seen the head; it had been torn from the trunk and hurled to an incredible distance.

That trunkless head he now fancied he saw, in the middle of the fog; and his body began to sweat cold, and his hands to shake so that he could hardly hold the box. But if he let it fall——

He came hastily down the ladder, and sat down on the dirty ground, with the infernal engine beside him.

By-and-by he got up and tried to warm his hands and feet by motion, and, at last, he recovered his fortitude, and went softly and cat-like up the steps again, in spite of the various dangers he incurred.

Of what was this man's mind composed, whom neither a mere bribe could buy to do this deed, nor pure fanaticism without a bribe; but, where both inducements met, neither the risk of immediate death, nor of imprisonment for life, nor both dangers united, could divert him from his deadly purpose, though his limbs shook, and his body was bedewed with a cold perspiration?

He reached the top of the ladder, he put his hand inside the grate; there was an aperture, but he could not find the bottom. He hesitated.

Here was a fresh danger: if he let the box fall it might explode at once and send him to eternity.

Once more he came softly down, and collected all the tow and wool he could find. He went up the ladder and put these things through the grating; they formed a bed.

Then he went back for the fatal box, took it up the ladder with beating heart, laid it softly in its bed, uncoiled the fuse and let it hang down.

So now these two fiendish things were placed, and their devilish tails

hanging out behind them. The fuses had been cut with the utmost nicety to burn the same length of time—twelve minutes.

But Cole was too thoughtful and wary to light the fuses until everything was prepared for his escape. He put the ladder on board the boat, disposed the oars so that he could use them at once; then crept to the engine-chimney, kneeled down beside the fuse, looked anxiously up at the faint light glimmering above, and took off his hat.

With singular cunning and forethought he had pasted a piece of sand-paper into his hat. By this means he lighted a lucifer at once, and kept it out of sight from the windows, and also safe from the weather; he drew the end of the fuse into the hat, applied the match to it out of sight, then blew the match out and darted to his other infernal machine. In less than ten seconds he lighted that fuse too; then stept into the boat, and left those two devilish sparks creeping each on its fatal errand. He pulled away with exulting bosom, beating heart, and creeping flesh. He pulled swiftly up stream, landed at the bridge, staggered up the steps, and found Coventry at his post, but almost frozen, and sick of waiting.

He staggered up to him and gasped out, "I've done the trick, give me the brass, and let me go. I see a halter in the air." His teeth chattered.

But Coventry, after hoping and fearing for two hours and a half, had lost all confidence in his associate, and he said, "How am I to know you've done anything?"

"You'll see and you'll hear," said Cole. "Give me the brass."

"Wait till I see and hear," was the reply.

"What, wait to be nabbed? Another minute, and all the town will be out after me. Give it me, or I'll take it."

"Will you?" And Coventry took out a pistol, and cocked it. Cole recoiled.

"Look here," said Coventry; "there are one hundred and fifty sovereigns in this bag. The moment I receive proof you have not deceived me, I give you the bag."

"Here, where we stand?"

"Here, on this spot."

"Hush! not so loud. Didn't I hear a step?"

They both listened keenly. The fog was thick by this time.

Cole whispered, "Look down the river. I wonder which will go off first? It is very cold; very." And he shook like a man in an ague.

Both men listened, numbed with cold, and quivering with the expectation of crime.

A clock struck twelve.

At the first stroke the confederates started and uttered a cry. They were in that state when everything sudden shakes men like thunder.

All still again, and they listened and shook again with fog and crime.

Sudden a lurid flash, and a report, dull and heavy, and something tall seemed to lean towards them from the sky, and there was a mighty rushing sound, and a cold wind in their faces, and an awful fall of masonry on the water, and the water spurted under the stroke. The great chimney had fallen in the river. At this very moment came a sharp, tremendous report like a clap of thunder close at hand. It was so awful, that both bag and pistol fell out of Coventry's hand and rang upon the pavement, and he fled, terror-stricken.

Cole, though frightened, went down on his knees, and got the bag, and started to run the other way.

But almost at the first step he ran against a man, who was running towards him.

Both were staggered by the shock, and almost knocked down.

But the man recovered himself first, and seized Cole with a grip of iron.

When Coventry had run a few steps he recovered his judgment so far as to recollect that this would lay him open to suspicion. He left off running, and walked briskly instead.

Presently the great door of the works was opened, and the porter appeared crying wildly for help, and that the place was on fire.

The few people that were about made a rush, and Coventry, driven by an awful curiosity, went in with them ; for why should he be suspected any more than they ?

He had not gone in half a minute when Mr. Ransome arrived with several policemen, and closed the doors at once against all comers.

Strange to say, the last explosion had rung the bell in the police office ; hence this prompt appearance of the police.

The five or six persons who got in with Coventry knew nothing, and ran hither and thither. Coventry, better informed, darted at once to Little's quarters, and there beheld an awful sight ; the roof presented the appearance of a sieve : of the second floor little remained but a few of the joists, and these were most of them broken and stood on end and across each other, like a hedgehog's bristles.

In Little's room, a single beam in the centre, with a fragment of board, kept its place, but the joists were all dislocated or broken in two, and sticking up here and there in all directions : huge holes had been blown in the walls of both rooms, and much of the contents of the rooms blown out by them : so vast were these apertures, that it seemed wonderful how the structure hung together ; the fog was as thick in the dismembered and torn building as outside, but a large gas-pipe in Little's room was wrenched into the form of a snake and broken, and the gas set on fire and flaring, so that the devastation was visible ; the fireplace also hung on heaven knows how.

Coventry cast his eyes round, and recoiled with horror at what he had done: his foot struck something; it was the letter-box, full of letters, still attached to the broken door. By some instinct of curiosity he stooped and peered. There was one letter addressed "Grace Carden."

He tried to open the box; he could not: he gave it a wrench, it was a latticed box, and came to pieces. He went down the stairs with the fragments and the letters in his hand; feet approached, and he heard a voice close to him say, "This way, Mr. Ransome, for God's sake!" A sort of panic seized him; he ran back, and in his desperation jumped on to the one beam that was standing, and from that through the open wall, and fell on the soft mud by the river bank. Though the ground was soft, the descent shook him and embedded him so deeply he could not extricate himself for some time. But terror lends energy, and he was now thoroughly terrified: he thrust the letters in his pocket, and, being an excellent swimmer, dashed at once into the river; but he soon found it choked up with masonry and *débris* of every kind: he coasted this, got into the stream, and swam across to the other side. Then, taking the lowest and darkest streets, contrived at last to get home, wet and filthy, and quaking.

Ransome and his men examined the shattered building within and without; but no trace could be found of any human being, alive or dead.

Then they got to the river-side with lights, and here they found foot-marks. Ransome set men to guard these from being walked over.

Attention was soon diverted from these. Several yards from the torn building, a woman was found lying all huddled together on a heap of broken masonry. She was in her night-dress, and a counterpane half over her. Her forehead and head were bleeding, and she was quite insensible. The police recognized her directly. It was Jael Dence.

She was alive, though insensible, and Ransome had her conveyed at once to the infirmary.

"Bring more lights to the water-side," said he; "the explosion has acted in that direction."

Many torches were brought. Keen eyes scanned the water. One or two policemen got out upon the ruins of the chimney, and went ankle-deep in water. But what they sought could not be found. Ransome said he was glad of it. Everybody knew what he meant.

He went back to Little's room, and examined it minutely. In the passage he found a card-case. It was lying on the door. Ransome took it up mechanically, and put it in his pocket. He did not examine it at this time: he took for granted it was Little's. He asked one of his men whether a man had not been seen in that room. The officer said "Yes."

"Did he come down?"

"No; and I can't think how he got out."

"It is plain how he got out; and that accounts for something I observed in the mud. Now, Williams, you go to my place for that stuff I use to take the mould of foot-prints. Bring plenty. Four of you scour the town, and try and find out who has gone home with river-mud on his shoes or trousers. Send me the porter."

When the porter came, he asked him whether Mr. Little had slept in the works.

The porter could not say for certain.

"Well, but what was his habit?"

"He always slept here of late."

"When did you see him last?"

"I let him into the works."

"When?"

"I should think about seven o'clock."

"Did you let him out again?"

"No, Mr. Ransome."

"Perhaps you might, and not recollect. Pray think."

The porter shook his head.

"Are you sure you did not let him out?"

"I am quite sure of that."

"Then the Lord have mercy on his soul!"

National Antipathies.

If any one should ask what is the quality which most powerfully attracts our affections to our neighbours, it would not, perhaps, be a gross misrepresentation to say that it is success. Without any thought of flattery, or still less of private advantage, we have an instinctive love of prosperity. So long as thou doest well unto thyself, we are told on high authority, men will speak good of thee. Make a fortune in business, rise to be a chancellor or an archbishop, become a popular novelist or poet, and it is surprising how much benevolence will naturally be developed in the hearts of your neighbours. On the other hand, it is no less true that our bitterest dislikes are generally owing to jealousy. The man who made the successful speech when we broke down, or the lady who had the splendid offer which we for good reasons did not decline, must be found guilty of some glaring defects in order at all to reconcile us to ourselves. It depends upon other circumstances whether our sympathy or our jealousy prevails in any given case. Each successful man, for example, may live surrounded by a small circle of irritated rivals; but those who are at a little greater distance take as much pleasure in the discomfiture of his competitors as in his own success. The mass of mankind are sufficiently unselfish to admire great virtues and talents in people far removed from them, however much they may dislike those qualities in their immediate neighbours. Ten-pound householders like a great statesman, when second-rate officials exhaust themselves in picking holes in his character; but they might not be so fond of one of their own neighbours who had risen from a ten-pound to a fifty-pound tenement.

Some such conflict of sentiments seems often to govern our feeling towards rival nations. Every true Englishman at the bottom of his soul hates a foreigner,—or, if that expression be a trifle too strong, has a keen perception of the notorious inferiority of all other races. The feeling, however, fluctuates strangely in intensity. Probably, if the truth were known, our normal state of feeling is one of contempt towards every one who does not speak English—and, moreover, the English of England—tempered by uncomfortable doubts as to the perfect security of our position. We don't think a Frenchman our equal, but we rather shrink from comparing Paris to London. We treat a German with affable contempt, but we have a vague awe for his supposed authority on philological or metaphysical inquiries, and some suspicion of his growing practical abilities. An American is, of course, a bad imitation of a Briton, but he certainly inhabits a large country, and though we sneer at his amazing statistics, they do convey some unpleasantly significant facts. The dislike or

the admiration comes uppermost at different times. We generally regard the chief nations of the earth as our rivals and dislike them accordingly —especially if we fancy that we are passing them in the race. It is pleasant to be able to point to our next-door neighbours as illustrations of the failings from which we are exempt. Our grandfathers used to contemplate the miserable French slaves to an arbitrary monarchy as living illustrations of the evils produced by the want of a British Constitution. If they had been perfectly certain of their own indisputable superiority, their antipathy would have been swallowed up in their conceit. Nobody dislikes a chimpanzee or a negro in Africa. But once admit the possibility that the chimpanzee may claim the right of suffrage, or the negro propose to stand for a presidency, and we shall come to counting over every shortcoming they may exhibit with a feeling strongly approaching to hatred. We should make pointed remarks as to the shape of the chimpanzee's skull, and challenge him very frequently to stand upright on his hind-legs. Imagine, however, that the chimpanzee makes a further step in advance; that he learns to dress and live cleanly like a gentleman, gets into our pulpits and preaches brilliant sermons, rises at the bar, and is permitted to grace his ugly countenance with a judge's wig, and we should begin to see things in a different light. We should begin to remark his singular activity in spite of some external awkwardness; we should admire the strength of his jaws and recognize the obvious marks of intelligence in his face; and that, not because we should expect to get anything by flattering him, but simply as a part of the homage spontaneously paid to success. At least, it is only in this way that I can account for the curious changes of opinion which we have lately witnessed. What high moral ground we took in condemning Prussian ambition until the battle of Sadowa! How speedily we changed our view of the American contest after the surrender of Richmond! Neither of those events made any difference to the rights of the cause, but they converted people more rapidly than cartloads of tracts. Providence, we all hold, is on the side of the strongest battalions; I know not if that be an orthodox sentiment, but perhaps it may be explained by the singular uniformity with which the strongest battalions always prove to have been on the right side of the question. Providence may, without profanity, be supposed to help those who had so clearly the best of the argument. I believe, indeed, that most people are a little ashamed of the rapidity with which we have occasionally changed front. I cannot here argue the point—more difficult than may appear at first sight—whether that change has not some substantial grounds, and whether success in such cases as I have noticed, does not indicate some qualities which may properly challenge our esteem. The prosperity of a nation, unlike that of an individual, is a pretty good test of its morality and intelligence. Such arguments, however, whatever may be their weight, do not tell for much on the public mind. We admire success on its own account; we like to be on the winning side;

and as the people who hold a party to be in the right generally prophesy that it will be victorious, they naturally claim the fulfilments of their predictions as demonstrating the truth of their convictions. I am content to remark that there is something rather absurd and undignified in these spasmodic outbursts of congratulation. It may be sensible, but it does not appear to be high-minded, to abuse people as long as they are rather out of luck, and to break forth in jubilant pæans and songs of triumph the moment they have established, not their right, but their power. There is such a thing as the logic of facts; but a man with any depth of conviction does not yield at once to every syllogism of the strong-battalion kind. He yields the less readily, because he knows that it is not always one victory which decides a war. Our *Te Deums* are sometimes premature as well as undignified, and it is very awkward when, in the course of a few years, we sing them alternately in honour of the different combatants.

What, then, is at the bottom of this weakness? It is, in two words, that, as a rule, we haven't got any convictions worthy the name; our likes and dislikes, our sympathies and antipathies, as applied to foreign nations, are, for the most part, mere fancies, which do not deserve the compliment of serious discussion. Of course, I except the reader and the writer of this article. They have profoundly considered the complex question involved, and can pronounce with some confidence on the merits of the different races of mankind. But then their opinions are widely different from those of the mob, and are mere insignificant drops compared with the huge current of prejudices and predilections which go to make up what we call public opinion. When we inquire into the real value of the general sentiment, when we try to frame it into definite propositions, and to assign its true grounds, we see how singularly worthless it must be in the eyes of a real philosopher. The good old John Bull prejudice, which expressed itself in the poetical maxim, "Down with Jews and wooden shoes," was intelligible enough as a mere inarticulate cry of wrath. It meant to say, not that the French were more wicked and stupid than ourselves (and no reasonable man supposed that they were one or the other), but simply that we had been in the habit of fighting them for several centuries with varying success. It was not a judgment founded on evidence, but merely a roundabout way of asserting the geographical fact that France is divided from England by a narrow arm of the sea, and that many disputes have arisen in consequence. Nelson, who had a fine turn for pithy expressions of sentiment, told his midshipmen that the whole duty of man was for them summed up in the two great commandments to do as they were bid, and to hate the French as they did the devil. Philosophically considered, that merely meant to say that, for the time being, the teaching of the Christian religion was superseded by the Admiralty orders, in pursuance of which it was the main business of an English sailor to burn, sink, and destroy every French ship that he happened to meet. As a rule of practice, there were obvious conveniences

in this condensed summary of national sentiment. As an expression of a general truth, it is unnecessary to point out the various qualifications necessary to give it even a temporary validity. The old warlike creed has gone partly out of fashion, and though it survives here and there, it need not be seriously discussed. The hatred of two neighbouring nations proves no more as to their merit than the antipathy of a dog and cat proves as to their respective values. It indicates a blind instinct, not a reasonable conviction. But there is a more refined method of reaching certain similar conclusions, which deserves a rather fuller consideration. The expression of simple hostility is converted by skilful writers into a theory, which is not, on the face of it, absurd. Some of our ablest speculative reasoners profess a dislike to foreigners, not because they are intrinsically inferior to ourselves, but because their laws embody certain political or social principles. The French are assailed because they give the ordinary example of over-centralization; the Americans because they show, on a large scale, the effect of unbridled democracy; and similarly each people is regarded as an experiment in which the working of certain ideas is practically illustrated. It would, however, be apparently unreasonable to dislike a people merely because they were the victims of circumstances; and, therefore, each victim is credited further with the possession of a certain national character, which makes them specially susceptible to a given set of theories. The French, for example, are, by the innate turn of their minds, unduly attracted by symmetrical system; Englishmen by practical considerations, without a proper regard for theory; and so on. And I do not doubt for a moment that this view is founded on a most important truth. There are such things as natural character and influence of race. If we could analyze the character of an individual, and say precisely what is owing to the circumstances under which he has been placed, and what is owing to the qualities which he has inherited, I fully believe that the hereditary influences would turn out to be by far the most important. The same principle is, in all probability, exemplified on a large scale in nations. There is a profound difference between the character of the Teuton and the Celt, and a difference which would make itself felt if they were placed in precisely similar situations, if only we could say what it was. For it is here that my difficulty begins. I listen with great pleasure to the plausible gentlemen who tell us so confidently what peculiarities in our national character are owing to the Celtic or the Teutonic infusion in our blood, or who even go into finer distinctions, and trace out provincial shades of character with the utmost precision. But I confess that my pleasure is mixed with an utter scepticism. It is all very pretty and exceedingly neat; and when you have got the trick of it, nothing can be easier. I would undertake to show, if anybody would listen, that the national peculiarities could be traced in the different fashions, say, of French and English boots, or in the fact that hansom cabs are popular in London, and never take root on the continent. The ingenuity displayed in such speculations is, to my

mind, much clearer than their solid value. Some truths are probably struck out by the discussion; but, granting even, which I most vehemently doubt, that some very acute observers may make valuable inferences, it is certain that the popular notions are never correct, and often preposterous in the highest degree. If we could analyze human character as we can analyze a drop of water, and say that it was made up of certain qualities in certain definite proportions: if we could say that the formula for an Englishman was two atoms of courage to two of fine intellect, and one of imagination, whilst for a Frenchman we must substitute other known numbers, just as we can tell how many items of hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon go to make water or atmospheric air, the problem would be comparatively easy. But no one, not even the profoundest philosopher, has really discovered the chemical composition of human character; and all that most of us can do is to make very rough guesses at the nature of a few obvious peculiarities. We cannot give a scientific account of the matter; but we can draw a rough caricature; we can stick a bowie-knife into the hand of the American, and provide the German with a glass of Bavarian beer, though we are profoundly ignorant of the occult causes which make beer congenial to Germans or bowie-knives to Americans. But when we get beyond the mere external oddity, our judgments are at least as full of palpable error as of truth. Take, for example, that old-fashioned notion that Englishmen were specially "practical." Can any human being say exactly what it means, or what is its value if it means anything? Is it practical to have the streets of London worse swept and cleaned and paved than those of any continental capital? Is it practical to have got all our charitable institutions into such a muddle that nobody knows whether they do more good or harm? Is it practical to retain old-fashioned institutions and theories for a longer time than any people in Europe, merely because they are old-fashioned? There is, I daresay, some answer to those questions, and others which go very deeply into some of our political theories; but it is plain that "practical" must have some interpretation very different from that which it bears in ordinary life. Unluckily, having made the general assertion, we are quite as much given to rely upon it in cases where it is evidently false as in those where it may be approximately true. To take a different case: I have often read lamentations over the prosaic and unimaginative nature of Englishmen, and I believe that those lamentations refer to some real evils; but it is strange that we should be content with such an imputation upon a race, whose most indisputable claim to intellectual merit is precisely the extraordinary value of its poetical literature. We are unimaginative it may be, but that epithet must be interpreted in a sense compatible with the fact that we are exceptionally fertile in Shakspeares, Spensers, Miltons, Wordsworths, Byrons, Shelleys, and other names which every one may supply according to his tastes. The Irish, who have scarcely produced a single second-rate poet, or, what is even stranger

in regard of some of the qualities ascribed to them, a second-rate humourist, are frequently contrasted with us to our disadvantage in this particular excellence. A better case might be made out for their oratorical capacities; and the difference suggests that possibly (for I propound no theory myself whilst condemning others) we ought to substitute for our fine sweeping assertion about imagination, one resting on a far more delicate distinction between the rhetorical and the poetical faculties. To come to a point more closely connected with our immediate subject, there are, or were, a whole set of current commonplaces about the differences between the French and English races, of which we may boldly say that there is not one which does not contain as much falsehood as truth. We used to boast about our exclusive possession of the word "home," and to infer that French family life was a hollow sham, and that French domestic affections were less warm than our own. Now it is notorious that in many ways this is the very reverse of the truth; and that, to take only one instance, French families manage to live together on terms of intimacy which we find to be totally impracticable in England. Probably the assertion was due, in part, to a superficial study of a small but conspicuous class of French society, and to the dissolution of certain opinions in France under the influences of the eighteenth century, and partly to a simple misinterpretation of facts. A man who spends his evenings at a public-house in London is generally a bad husband and father. Hasty tourists inferred that a Frenchman who frequented a café must necessarily be driven from his home by quarrels with his wife and children, or his own ill-regulated tastes, which is, perhaps, as absurd an inference as has often been drawn, and yet was once accepted as an undeniable truth. The proverbial remark about our own shopkeeping propensities is often supposed by the vulgar to mean that we, as a nation, are more attentive than our neighbours to pounds, shillings, and pence. Yet, as a matter of fact, everybody may observe that an ordinary Frenchman thinks more about a franc than his parallel in England about a half-crown, and that our faults and our actions are both connected with a propensity to extravagance or liberality (it matters not which it is called) which leads to many conspicuous results; as, for example, to so palpable a difference as that which makes Frenchmen heaven-born cooks and Englishmen quite the reverse. I advance even this statement with diffidence: for it is only a guess at a possible solution of a difficult problem.

Without further illustration, it seems to be sufficiently clear that, when we venture to make any distinct proposition about national characteristics, we are as often wrong as right, and generally make a hazardous inference from a particular case the ground of a sweeping assertion, which, in most of its applications, is wrong, and is often the very reverse of the truth. The philosophy of national character has yet to be discovered. Unluckily, however, this collection of loose, inaccurate, and often absurd statements, forms the justification, if not the cause, of our national antipathies. We

hate, or used to hate, a Frenchman, for the sufficient, if unsatisfactory, reason that he was our neighbour. We justified our hatred by attributing to him a set of qualities which he did not really possess, and which, as a rule, were merely conjectural explanations of phenomena, which sometimes existed in reality, and sometimes only in our imaginations. Although educated people have grown wiser, the Frenchman of the popular fancy is still a mere bundle of qualities thus invented; the real being is as different as possible, although even the wisest of us are far from knowing what he precisely is. The political theories founded on this untrustworthy groundwork of guesses and exaggerations are, to my mind, worth little or nothing; but, at any rate, the national antipathies founded upon them are equally foolish and injurious. I doubt our real possession of any one of the qualities on which we plume ourselves, or our liability to any of the faults for which we most frequently do penance. I do not, indeed, deny that we have made some rough approximations to the truth, but I hold them to be utterly frivolous as the basis of national imputations or self-glorifications.

Supposing, however, that those opinions have more value than I can admit, there is still another consideration. Stated shortly, it is this—that we are all so much alike that we have no reason for vanity or humility. A book which made some sensation rather more than a century ago, argued, with great naïveté, in defence of two propositions: the first was that the British Constitution was the noblest invention of man, and the pride and envy of the world; the second, that the English people were utterly degraded and demoralized, and going to ruin as fast as possible, whilst the French, though equally bad by nature, were kept by their Government in some degree of efficiency and respectability. It was odd that the writer did not observe the difficulty of reconciling his propositions; but the same contradiction is involved in half the commonplace dissertations on the subject. The English race, they tell us, is the finest in the world; the English institutions are the happiest system ever known. And yet, when we look for the natural conclusion, that the English people are the wisest and happiest on the face of the earth, we are cruelly disappointed. We find that more often peoples made of inferior materials and governed abominably ill, are nevertheless held up for our imitation, as clearly ahead of us in all sorts of important matters. They are better educated, more moral, and generally more capable of leading rational and civilized lives. Obviously there must be some mistake in the premises which lead to such admittedly erroneous conclusions. Perhaps our institutions may not be absolutely perfect; but, as I shrink from such a heresy, I would rather say that other races have probably some good qualities, of which we have failed to take account. It is plain that, with the best will in the world, we cannot venture to assert that we are really, on a general and impartial view of the subject, distinctly better than our neighbours. There is some law of compensation which makes up one way what is wanting in others, and forbids any one to say, without the grossest pre-

sumption, that any civilized race is fairly at the head of the world. Each has quite as much to learn as to teach, and, in the long run, must be content with asserting its claims to being an important member of the great family. This being so, the prejudices of which we are so proud are necessarily ridiculous. I hate a man in private life, for I confess to hating some people, for excellent reasons; I hate the man at the club who always engages the particular newspaper that I want, because he shows a revolting selfishness; I hate the man who abuses me, because he is obviously insensible to a high class of merit; I hate the man whose theological or political opinions are opposite to my own, because he must plainly be stupid or insincere. All this may be unchristian, but it is not illogical. But to hate (or, indeed, to love) a nation must, on the face of it, be foolish. Such a sentiment implies that the nation is in its nature worse than our own; whereas, as we have just admitted, one nation is in the long run pretty much as good as another. Some very excellent writers whom I could name, think that they display their wisdom by systematically abusing French principles, and by implication the race which asserts them. Unless they could prove, what is quite impossible to prove, that the French are, as a whole, inferior to ourselves, their virtuous warmth only demonstrates that there are certain good qualities to which they are invariably blind. It was very proper, some time ago, when nobody read German books, to impress upon Englishmen generally that the Germans had really some remarkably good qualities both in literature and practical life. The people who undertook that task naturally grew fond of their clients, and it became common to contrast, in all kinds of ways, German simplicity and earnestness, and imaginative power with the supposed defects of Frenchmen in the same capacities. Now that the balance has been redressed, this zeal seems to be out of place, and to tend to an equal exaggeration of the opposite kind. When our writers were absurdly given to Johnsonese, and the elaborate pomposity of Latinized sentences, it was as well to point out the value of the Saxon elements of our language; we may now be content to admit that a good writer should show an equal command of all our resources. When the negative philosophy of Voltaire and his school threatened to be in the ascendant, it was a good service to set forth, as Coleridge did, amongst others, that there was in existence a philosophy of different tendencies. We may now speak without fear of the great and most valuable excellencies of the French intellect. It is time that we should endeavour to do justice to every one, and abandon the attempt to find exclusive merit in any of the great divisions of the European races.

It is true that there are many nations to whom this does not apply. We are sufficiently superior to some savage tribes to justify us, if we please, in regarding their malpractices as indications of generally lower morality, as well as lower intelligence. We might hate them with the same right as we hate a malevolent fool—assuming, for the moment, that we ought ever to hate anybody. But it is precisely in this case, where dislike might

be justified on logical grounds, that we cease to feel it. We admit when people are clearly weaker, and probably worse than ourselves, that their errors are to be excused on the ground of their temptations and their weakness. The remote settler hates the native, who takes his scalp, or occasionally dines off his family. But we, being conscious of our perfect security, can afford to regard the perishing races of the world, like the chimpanzee, as objects neither of love nor hatred, though, it may be, of more or less humane feeling. We wish them to be treated kindly, but they are not near enough to our own level to excite any jealousy, or any strong antipathy. To make out a good cause for aversion, we should prove that with the same powers and the same opportunities as ourselves, a nation or an individual has gone wrong, from what Artemus Ward described as "pure cussedness." And that is precisely the phenomenon which, common as it is in private life—specially amongst our partners in business, our children, and generally our intimates in any capacity—is not exemplified amongst any existing nations.

In this, as in many other ways, we cherish absurd feelings, owing to our prevailing trick of personification. We attribute all our virtues and failings to an imaginary Leviathan, as Hobbes would have called him, known as John Bull. He is not only the ideal embodiment of our supposed peculiarities, but answers as a kind of tangible symbol, by the contemplation of which our enemies work up their wrath into a proper white heat. He does the same duty as that unlucky figurehead upon which Mr. Quilp exhausted his overflowings of unattached fury; and is as useful, in his way, as Guy Faux's effigy to the genuine Protestant bigot. When Fenians and their friends denounce England in the American newspapers, they instinctively bring out this concrete image to be exposed to the storms of their rhetoric. There is felt to be a certain absurdity in abusing twenty millions of a population which, in the main, is good-tempered, ignorant, and profoundly innocent of any overt actions or any opinions on the subject; but when they are all symbolized as a single bloated and arrogant monster, with top-boots and a bull-dog, it seems only natural to belabour him, and plaster him with filth. Pascal tells us how absurd it is that two men should take the utmost pride in killing each other because they happen to live on opposite sides of a river; and, after making all the obvious deductions, it must be admitted that war is, at bottom, a very shocking system in many ways. But its atrocity is concealed by our habit of talking habitually, as if a nation were really one man, and responsible for all the bad language or acts of folly that its officials may commit. Were it not for this habit we should get rid of the common error of believing that foreign politics should be decided by motives of gratitude and resentment. There is ground for such feelings towards individuals, because individuals do act, more or less, from spite or from unselfish benevolence. But a nation is, and ought to be, systematically selfish. It may show more or less regard to certain conventional rules of behaviour towards its neighbours, but at bottom it does

what it thinks, on the whole, will answer best for its own prosperity, and its views upon such matters are determined by its position and circumstances. It acts, at best, as a selfish man acts who does not want to get into trouble with the police, but is thoroughly determined to make his own fortune, without caring much about his influence on his neighbour. There are excellent reasons why such conduct is, on the whole, the best for mankind at large, and we have quite enough to do in looking after our own interests. But, obviously, gratitude or resentment is as much out of place in dealing with such a body as in an ordinary commercial transaction. To buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest is not the highest ideal of Christian duty; but it is all that a nation can properly or habitually do. If our plans have been crossed or aided by a rival power, it is simply because it was their interest to do so. France did not help America to independence from any romantic notions, but because they thought, according to the politics of the time, that it was their interest to upset the English empire; and Washington very properly inferred that Americans owed no particular gratitude to Frenchmen. When a nation abuses us, it is merely the abuse of a large number of people talking about matters on which they are specially ignorant, and uttering opinions which are the inevitable consequence of their position in the world. Why should we care to resent their empty phrases? The sooner we get rid of any infusion of sentiment in such matters the sooner we shall understand each other, and be able to come to a reasonable agreement not to cut throats and blow up ships unnecessarily.

So far as this argument goes to imply the unreasonableness of animosity against foreigners, it would perhaps be generally accepted. We are all anxious to enter upon the period of universal philanthropy, it being well understood that we may begin it by clearing away a few savages, rectifying a few frontiers, upsetting half-a-dozen kingdoms, and remodelling the map of the world. These preliminaries once settled, we earnestly desire to sit down under our own vines and fig-trees, and listen peacefully to such revilings or eulogies as foreigners may be disposed to bestow upon ourselves and others. There is, however, one more conclusion which is still a little unpleasant. If hatred and love of a nation are alike unreasonable, it follows that we ought not to like our own. We ought to be graceful cosmopolites, acknowledging no ties of country, free from all vulgar prejudices, and regarding the kingdoms of the world, and their intrigues and squabblings, in the spirit with which we should look upon the doings in another planet. International prejudices, from this point of view, may be a folly, and patriotism must be a vice. I confess that I am inclined to accept the conclusion. Patriots, as a general rule, seem to me to be a very hotheaded and noxious set of people; and their favourite virtue to be a convenient cloak for all the most mischievous prejudices that are current in the world. Why should I "glory in the name of Briton?" Is there any particular satisfaction in being the inhabitant of an island to which nobody denies a good many virtues, but

which certainly has as many faults as it can conveniently manage to get along with? People tell me that this, and that, and the other thing is grossly wrong; that our prevailing beliefs are narrow and provincial, that our government is a muddle, that our education is contemptible, that our politics are petty, and, after saying a great deal more of the same kind, and much more, indeed, than I believe to be true, they turn round upon me with immense indignation, if I venture to sum up all these criticisms in one, and say that Englishmen are no better than their neighbours, and that they ought not to give themselves airs as if they were. We may find fault with every particular detail in the country, and be praised for doing it; but the inference that the whole is faulty, is regarded as a crime against patriotism and as an unpardonable sin. If we put the criticism with any force, we are finally assured, by way of an unanswerable condemnation, that our views are un-English. Yet, as an honest man, I can't avoid certain conclusions. Every national commonplace has its counterpart. We boast, or used to boast, that when a slave put his foot on English soil his chains dropped off. When a similar question was argued in France a hundred years ago it was met by a similar sentiment. "Dès qu'un esclave est entré en France," said the lawyers, "il y devient libre." Is England or France the land of liberty? Every nation, again, in Europe, so far as I know, asserts with a unanimous voice that, whatever other faults it may possess, its soldiers are the bravest in the world. In other matters they may have their equals, but once let them come to the bayonet, and then it will be seen that English, or French, or German, or Russian, or Swedish, or Dutch, or Spanish, or, it may be, Portuguese soldiers, are invincible. From which it may be confessed, that it is unfortunate that the bayonet is so seldom used that the point can hardly be decided; and also that one or other of these assertions must be false. I have a suspicion, founded partly on my own consciousness, and partly on avowals not often made in print, that the real contest on a battle-field is one not of courage but of cowardice. I believe that military history is really what all history has been declared to be, a conspiracy to conceal the truth. There is every inducement to enormous lying about battles, and nobody has any interest in giving us the plain facts without the gloss, as the smoke and the roar of cannons conceal for a time half the horrors of the occasion. The bombastic rhetoric of military historians conceals the cowardice, and the meanness, and the brutality by which these horrors are produced. Whenever I have had an opportunity of seeing men in dangerous positions, I have remarked that even animal courage, so far from being common, is one of the rarest of qualities. Our instinct, whatever we may say, is to look another way when we hear cries of murder, and to be unavoidably occupied in important business when there is likely to be a row in the streets. Discipline works wonders in a crowd of cowards, by providing them with as good motives for standing still as for running away, and by forming an

artificial instinct for obeying orders in moments of confusion. But I never met a brave man who did not confess to being terribly frightened in his first action, whilst it is a well-known truth that the more you see of such things the less you like them. From all which I infer that the prevailing opinion of the courage of each particular race must be a measure as much of its powers of lying as of its natural disposition to fight. I would rather not stake my patriotic feelings on the existence of a quality which is the chosen subject for the most monstrous self-deception. Take any set of men, dress them in one colour, and accustom them to stand in a row, and they will, in all probability, be more afraid of running away than of anything else. Their merit will depend on the intelligence with which they are combined much more than on any intrinsical pugnacity. What is generally called patriotism leads us to sink these notorious facts, and to brag intolerably about the most doubtful of all merits. And consequently our politics too often resemble the behaviour of a couple of cowardly dogs, who growl at each other with every hair bristling by way of concealing their real state of mind, till at last one of them bites the other from sheer nervous irritability. It will be long before we venture to tell the truth about our extreme unwillingness to be shot, and we shall continue to boast of the patriotism involved in keeping up a childish game of brag. Often as the absurdity of the proceeding may be exposed, it will not be really weakened till the spirit of patriotism is more or less sapped at its base.

Of course, I might be easily answered by a long string of statements about the beneficial results which patriotism has at different times produced. I would willingly admit every one of them; but they only prove, what no sensible man denies, that many false opinions have been of essential service to mankind. The great majority of the existing race of mankind still believes in religious creeds which we know to be false; yet it would be an incalculable evil if they were deprived of those creeds, without receiving anything better in their place. The inhabitants of a certain small island, known by the nickname of Bimshire, believe, I am told, that they are the very cream of the world. They exclaim, "Bimshire, with all thy faults we love thee still!" They think that Bimshire could, if it liked, rule the main; and that after the decay of other nations Bimshire will flourish, great and free, the dread and envy of them all. If the effect of these opinions is to make the Bims more energetic and reforming than they would otherwise be, it would be a poor service to Bimshire to prove to its inhabitants, in the clearest way, that other nations possess nearly as much virtue and talent as they do themselves. Indeed, to take a more limited circle, everybody knows families which have been much benefited by the belief that there never were such people in the world as the Browns, or Joneses, or Robinsons. It is a good thing that a man should stick by his brother, even when his brother has been convicted of picking pockets; and if his fraternal affection is kept up by the belief that the pickpocket is a

perfect character in spite of his little failings, we need not be too anxious to dispel so pleasant an illusion. But this does not prove that we might not be at once wiser and better, that we might not get rid of the illusion without sacrificing the good feeling. We have been placed for good or for evil in a certain small island and brought into the closest connection with its inhabitants; we may surely be profoundly attached to them and willing to devote our lives to their improvement without believing that they are one bit better or cleverer than their neighbours. Being an Englishman, I recognize the duties which my position imposes upon me, and am yet satisfied that Englishmen are full of the grossest faults and stupidities. I don't think that they are in any serious degree the superiors of any of the nations with which they come in contact; but practically, it may be, I would do as much to improve them as those who talk the greatest nonsense about their supposed good qualities, and especially, I should be willing to do them the proverbially unpleasant service of exposing their faults; but whenever I come in contact with any specially notorious evil, I am put down with solemn appeals to local self-government, or the British Constitution, or the interests of this great empire, or some other idol to which we have been accustomed to pay a blind reverence. I am bound to swear by every abuse, and to defend every possible misconduct at home or abroad, so long as it can be brought under one of these sacred principles, or be described as, in some sense, the act of the collective people. This is the obligation which I altogether repudiate, for the simple reason that we know, as clearly as we know anything, that neither our institutions nor our character are, as a whole, better than those of our neighbours. The duties which are imposed upon us in the name of patriotism might be urged, with at least equal force, on the ground that we are specially stupid and immoral; and though I consider such an assertion to be as erroneous as its opposite, I should not try to howl down anybody who made it. We suffer grievously from a supposed necessity of omniscience in such matters. The number of people who can really form any judgment as to the comparative merits of English and foreign nations might be reckoned almost on one's fingers. The number of people who make the most confident and dogmatic assertions about it, and who fancy that they are specially virtuous for so doing, is almost incalculable. Of all European countries England is probably that where the most utter ignorance prevails as to the history, statistics, institutions, and politics of every other country; and, therefore, I don't see the virtue of cherishing opinions which can only be verified or refuted by an amount of investigation which is scarcely within human capacity, and most unequivocally beyond our own.

A CYNIC.

Shamrockiana.

CHAPTER IV.

The "Last Flicker of Nationality."

There was a moment of exultation in Ireland, after Mr. Grattan's successful assertion of the national claims, that was little short of intoxication, and it was under the influence of this maddening excitement sprung forth that passion for lavish and costly expenditure, that boundless hospitality, and that reckless mode of living which first embarrassed, and then ruined the chief fortunes of the land. In splendour of equipage, in princely entertainments, in dress, and in retinue generally, Dublin equalled any city of Europe. Carriages with six horses were the fashion of the day, and as many as thirty such equipages have been counted on the evening drive of the "Circular Road," as the modish promenade was then called. The Court of the Viceroy was more than the rival of St. James's in toilette and beauty, while society took a pride in showing that, besides mere material display, there were characteristics of wit and agreeability which could not be surpassed in the richer country.

Eccentricities of every kind were in vogue, as though men were bent on the display of traits and habits as unlike as possible to the graver ways and tastes of England; rash and absurd wagers were peculiarly the fashion: and Buck Whalley, as he was called, made his celebrated bet to walk to Jerusalem; and Beaucham Bagenal astonished Europe by a retinue that eclipsed many of the petty princes of the Continent, and by a series of extravagances that made him famous throughout Europe. He fought a Royal Duke; courted an Infanta; intoxicated a Doge of Venice; carried off a nun from an Italian convent; ending his exploits with a duel, in which he disarmed the first swordsman of Paris. Were not these traits enough to endear him to his countrymen and give him all the popularity that Ireland could bestow? especially when, returning to his native land and his paternal estate, he declared that the world had nothing to compare with his own country, and added patriotism as a member of Parliament to his other virtues!

It was from this rash and generously impulsive man came the well-known project to confer on Henry Grattan some great mark of national gratitude. His motion was, "That a committee should be appointed to consider and report what sum the Irish Parliament should grant to build a suitable mansion, and purchase an estate for their great deliverer."

It is not easy, in the altered condition of our own times, to imagine a period when such a project was heard with neither astonishment nor opposition. Neither the guardians of the public purse nor the tax-paying people had reached that careful regard for national expenditure which years of costly war and lavish waste are sure to impress. Ireland had but one thought: how to be generous enough to the most exalted and ablest of her patriots; and the Parliament, in this case, was the truest exponent of the nation. Nothing, however, can give a more adequate notion of the fervour which carried men along in public life, and made every move and every act vibrate with the enthusiastic temper of the times, than the fact that, when the vote came to be considered by the House, the Viceroy—the Duke of Portland—commissioned a member of his household to offer, as part of the intended grant to Mr. Grattan, "The Viceregal palace in the Phœnix Park," to be settled on Mr. Grattan and his heirs for ever, as a suitable residence for so meritorious a person."

It has been often remarked that English officials in Ireland become so imbued with the fervid spirit and impetuous character of the people amongst whom they are sojourning, that they actually surpass the natives in feats of extravagance and eccentricity; but what shall we say of such a project as this, when the representative of royalty offers one of the King's palaces as a gift to a subject, for no more ostensible reason than that the same man had persisted in a firm opposition to the Ministers of the Crown, and actually achieved a great political success over them?

There thus began that race for popularity between the Government and the patriotic party, which is not without its teaching to us in the present day: the Ministers trying to outdo the Opposition in concessions, and willing to peril great interests if they could only, by doing so, disparage and disconcert their opponents.

It became a contest between the Crown and the people upon which should devolve the right of rewarding men eminent for patriotism and ability: the Chief Secretary for Ireland declaring that this was one of the most cherished of the royal prerogatives, and that, for his part, he would have wished the honour might have come directly from the hand of the Sovereign; but, he added: "I will yield no reluctant or sullen assent; as the man was unprecedented, so was the occasion, and there could never be a precedent where so little likelihood of recurrence existed."

In this rivalry much of the enthusiasm that had suggested the reward evaporated, and, by the intervention of Mr. Grattan's friends, the sum was amended to one-half, which was immediately voted by the House; and though Corry denounced him afterwards, in that memorable altercation in which insult and irony reached their climax, as "the mendicant patriot who accepted one hundred thousand for his services, and took fifty for prompt payment," there never was a less merited sarcasm, as regarded honour or integrity. Never was the gratitude of a people more honestly earned—never more creditably or wisely bestowed!

There was, however, just that amount of success in causing division in the national party which suggested to the Viceroy the policy of endeavouring, by social attention and distinction, to win allies to the side of the Government.

The Castle became now the scene of unwonted hospitalities ; the receptions being more frequent and more brilliant than ever. The social character of the Irish, and a certain feudalism in the temperament of the nation, rendered them peculiarly accessible by the courtesies and attentions of rank, and, as it was a period when ladies exercised a very considerable influence in public life, these viceregal amenities met with a marked success. To counterbalance, in some measure, their effect, the Opposition chiefs were obliged to launch forth into a rival splendour, and thus Dublin attained an amount of brilliancy and life not to be equalled by any city of the like magnitude. If the entertainments of the Court surpassed all others in splendour and magnificence, the private parties of the capital were unapproachable, as regards the brilliant tone of the conversation and the Attic spirit that pervaded them.

The Bar of Ireland—ever the centre from which radiated all that was brilliant or eloquent in the land—formed the staple of a society singularly gifted and fascinating, and gave the impulse to that taste for conversational excellence which maintained its influence through succeeding generations ; and though only mouldering in its ashes now, occasionally astonishes the stranger by displays of flashing brilliancy that may well excite the mind in recalling a time when there "were giants in the land."

A great deal of the epigram, a considerable share of the wit of the time, was evidently elicited in attack or lampoon of the Government, whose unwieldy attempts to seduce men to the national party excited the sarcasm and sneers of their opponents ; and, as certainly the balance of intellectual vigour in the House inclined to the side of the Opposition, the Ministerialists were not supposed to lie on a bed of roses.

Among the Government partisans, however, was one very remarkable man, the celebrated Doctor Dugenan. He was a man of very humble origin, the son of a parish-clerk, who obtained a sizarship, and subsequently a scholarship in Trinity College. He rose from rank to rank at the bar till he became Judge of the Prerogative Court, his whole career being marked by the most strenuous opposition to the Catholics of Ireland, an opposition on which he lavished powers of abuse and invective the most violent, displaying, at the same time, abilities for controversy so marked, and learning so varied and profound, that nothing but the outrageous character of his championship could have rendered his higher gifts so comparatively valueless.

If he had little of the logical terseness of Swift, or of that incisive sarcasm that he abounded in, he had no small share of the coarser wit of the great satirist, and he was his equal in boisterous invective and passionate abuse. A more able or a more indiscreet supporter no administration ever possessed. He was, however, rough, unaccommodating, and

unmanageable, and his violence became at last so hurtful and so compromising to his party, that his death was rather a relief than a detriment to the Government.

There never was a time, perhaps, in which political rivalry and party animosity ran higher: violent speeches, pamphlets, pasquinades, and epigram abounded, and, as a consequence, hostile meetings were of every-day occurrence. The altercations in the House were frequently decided in the "fifteen acres," and there was a thorough understanding of the exact point at which invective should cease and the "pistol" come in.

There was not, strange to say, much real or lasting enmity after these passages of hostility. There was a great generosity abroad, and there was, there is no denying it, no small laxity in regard to principle. I have heard men sneeringly remark that had the modern precision in arms existed, there had been less of that spirit of combat, but I do not believe this. I am fully convinced that the habit of these meetings—the mere frequency—had steeled men on the subject; and as the consequence of anything like reluctance to go out would have been such irretrievable ruin, it was a far lighter alternative to stand the shot than show the white feather.

That men who had stood face to face at twelve paces to-day should be arm in arm within a week after was not at all impossible; and it is told of Corry, after his memorable duel with Grattan, when lying sick and wounded in a darkened room, he was once visited by a friend, who, after a few inquiries about his health, gradually entered on the cause of the quarrel, and unconsciously diverged into some very condemnatory remarks on Grattan, his late antagonist. Corry stopped him at once with a gesture of caution, and whispered, "Hush, take care, Henry" (Henry Grattan he meant) "is there, on the foot of the bed; he has never left me since *it* happened, and the poor fellow is worn out with watching, and just fallen off to sleep."

Such modes of acting and thinking, however favourably they might be construed by the Celtic intelligence, were so averse to all English notions and habits, that they impressed the mind of the greater nation with a very depreciatory estimate of the Irishman, which, unhappily, time has not since been able to modify in any great degree. There could not be but one opinion as to Irish quickness of perception and ready-wittedness. The Irishman's eloquence, displayed in every brilliant form, his facile expression, his logical clearness, his prompt illustration, were all unquestionable; nor was it one style alone, but in every variety of excellence, from the grandiose fulness of Burke to the varied imagery and ornate brilliancy of Grattan. That the Irish House was, in the character of its debates, a worthy rival of St. Stephen, could not be doubted. There was, however, to English appreciation at least, a want of dignity in public life. Men were too volatile, too outspoken; there were none of the reserves of state-craft; and, above all, men were too prone to make measures of politics

questions of personal honour, and to stake life or limb on issues which ought to have been decided on grounds of argument.

The Celtic impulsiveness is not, perhaps, a very Parliamentary quality, and requires to be weighted by that more phlegmatic and calculating element which forms the staple of the English nature. The first evidence of the different spirit in which the two Houses would treat the same measure was given on the question of the Regency.

The British Parliament had decided that the Prince should exercise a limited and restricted power during the illness of the King. The Irish House, not carried away, as some opined, by any access of loyalty to the Crown, nor moved in any degree by the emergency of Mr. Pitt, who saw all the danger that might accrue to his party from the accession of the Prince to power; but chiefly actuated by the desire to assert their independence, and on a matter which could not involve their loyalty in any suspicion, moved and carried an address to the Prince, declaring him to be the Regent of Ireland in as full, ample, and unqualified a manner as was enjoyed by his father: "To exercise all legal powers, jurisdiction, and prerogative to the Crown and the Government belonging thereto."

In the Commons this passed without a division. In the Lords, where it was moved by Lord Charlemont, it was carried by forty-five over twenty-six votes.

There is an anecdote connected with this decision, which is so far worth recalling that it exemplifies not merely Burke's readiness in a "mot," but curiously illustrates his unacquaintance with the usages of courtly life.

A short time after the Irish deputation had waited on the Prince to convey the vote of the Parliament sitting in Dublin, Burke was first honoured with an invitation to dine at Carlton House. His Royal Highness—than whom no one ever possessed more social tact, or that peculiar faculty of fascination by mere manner—prolonged the after-dinner sitting to a late hour, so much so, that much of the restraint of a royal presence was withdrawn, and a tone of easy jocularity and freedom prevailed. Edmund Burke, who was studiously careful not to commit anything like a breach of what he deemed might be courtly etiquette, watched keenly for what might indicate the proper moment to withdraw, and seeing, as he thought, a suggestion to this effect, in an accidental delay in the passing of the decanter, he made a gesture of rising from his seat. The Prince caught the movement at once, and cried out, "No, no, Mr. Burke, we are going to have another bottle."

Burke resumed his place with a deep bow, saying, "Certainly. Your Royal Highness is *jure de vino*. We have declared it as a nation."

CHAPTER V.

The Debate on the Union.

The shameless assertion that "the rebellion of '98 was promoted by Mr. Pitt to enable him to carry the Union," needs no contradiction. Still, it must be admitted that the atrocities of that insurrection served to make many partisans to the measure who could not readily have been corrupted by bribery or cajoled by flattery, for it would seem one of the traditional misfortunes of Ireland to be ruled less by the dictates of statesmanship and justice, than by regard to some passing emergency; and as the rebels determined the Union, so, in a degree, the Fenians have demolished the Church. While pamphlets circulated, and articles from newspapers appeared, setting forth all the advantages that must accrue to Ireland from a legislative union with England, and while the secret mechanism of corruption was at full work, influencing this man by offers of title, and that, by high place, Sir John de Blaquiere, afterwards Lord de Blaquiere, originated the novel idea of a club, every member of which should hold himself ready to provoke to mortal combat any of the Opposition whose eloquence or whose zeal might render him an obstacle to the Government. It was assumed that the spirit of the national party rendered this a mere measure of self-protection, and the club accordingly, to the number of thirty odd, dined together each day, to talk over their plans and concert their mode of action.

It must be remembered that the tone of the time did not attach to such a conspiracy any peculiar feeling of horror. Duels were of everyday occurrence, and a man's candidature for a club was always tested by the question, "Did he blaze?" *i.e.* had he fought? The very levity with which men discussed the theme was a fashionable affectation, and when Curran was found under the hands of his hairdresser at an early hour of the morning, and undergoing all the laborious process of being curled and powdered, his explanation was he "was dressing for the Provost's ball," in reality about to meet Mr. Hutchinson, the Provost of Trinity College, in mortal combat at the Phœnix. Another mot of his on the same subject is not unworthy of being remembered. It was on the occasion of his duel with Egan, the chairman of Kilmainham. Egan, as the injured party, was allowed to have the first shot. He fired and missed, and then, turning around, exclaimed, "My honour is satisfied," and was about to walk away; but Curran cried out, "Wait one moment. I mean to have a shot at 'your honour,'" which he did to some purpose, planting a bullet in, however, a not very fatal part.

The Irish country gentleman, who explained the passing his morning pistol-shooting "because he had a dinner-party on that evening," was really no exaggeration of the temper of the time; nor was a story of which the names of the actors are still fresh in my memory, but which, from respect to their descendants, I refrain to quote, in any way revolting to the spirit of

the day. A well-known silk-gown at the bar excused himself from accepting a challenge on the plea that his life was insured for ten thousand pounds, and it was his sole provision for his family, which would be forfeited if he came by his death in a duel. "Tell him," said his antagonist, —since that a judge,—"that I'll give him a mortgage on my estate for the money, and let him 'come out' with an easy heart."

John Toler, afterwards Lord Norbury, who was said to have "shot up" to eminence in the House by his readiness with the pistol, gave a peculiar force and significance to those personalities in which he was a master.

"We must set John Toler at him," was Lord Castlereagh's remark when a member of the Opposition had made himself unusually obnoxious to the Government; and certainly a willingness to "go out" was a necessary quality to any man who aspired to rank as a debater. If we turn to the names of those who fought, we shall find not alone the leaders of party and the eminent men who followed them, but all the law officers of the Crown, the judges of the land, the Lord Chancellor himself, and the Provost of the University, who, it might be thought, should have been the first to give a lesson of temper and conciliation to the youth of Ireland.

Political animosity rose on the question of the "Union" to a height which it had never before attained in the land. Not alone were the old friendships of youth severed, but families were broken up by party hatreds, and brother separated from brother. All that kindliness and good feeling which had once pervaded and, in fact, distinguished the public life of Ireland, were gone, and in their place distrust, dislike, and rancour had succeeded. Never were the debates so personal or so malicious, and never were the speakers more bent on provoking their opponents. If there happened to be a flaw in a man's political career, a stain on his consistency, or a doubt of his sincerity, it was sure to be paraded now in the most offensive colours. The great question whether Ireland was to maintain or surrender for ever what gave her the semblance of a nation was at stake, and men, in discussing it, were forced to display the passions which were fashioning their own destinies. They who embarked their fortunes with the stronger country were not slow to asperse the civilization of the land they were leaving, and there was no scorn too bitter or too deadly to be uttered by those who stood by the sinking ship of Irish nationality, determined to sink with her when she went down.

The most barefaced corruption was practised, and the terms by which this or that man's adhesion was secured were discussed openly, not only in society, but in the newspapers. On what authority, it is, of course, not easy to say, but the journals affected to know the various negotiations the Secretary, Mr. Cook, was engaged in, and how far he had failed in this quarter or succeeded in that. In most business-like fashion, too, would they inform their readers how the negotiations between the Government and Mr. Fox were proceeding favourably, or how Mr. Trench had stipulated for terms which Lord Castlereagh could not feel warranted to comply

with, unless in the event of a pressure not yet anticipated. Naturally, many of these aspersions were mere libels, which the smallest fragment of a fact often sufficed to originate; but they had the effect of keeping the public mind of the country in a state of irritation and suspicion that was positively maddening.

It was on a bright morning in January, 1799, when a sharp frost on the preceding night gave a crispness to the air and made the streets of Dublin unusually clean and fresh, that the inhabitants were astir at an early hour, crowding all the thoroughfares that led towards College Green, where the Parliament House stood, and where, on that day, the fate of Ireland as a nation was to be determined. Nothing that party zeal or devotion could do was neglected on either side. Expresses were sent off in every quarter to summon adherents, and at the various stations where post-horses were to be found, were the emissaries to be found bidding in rivalry against each other to secure priority on the road. If the Government possessed arguments on the score of corruption and bribery that carried their weight with many, the national sentiment was unanimously against them, and few supporters of the Ministry had courage to sport the blue colours of their party, and they hurried through the towns and villages at the full speed of their posters, while the green ribbon of the Opposition was hailed with cheers that scarcely died out at one station till they were caught up by the next.

It is seldom that a great political question can so appeal to the understandings of a whole people as to make them ardent partisans, in a sense superior to that which attaches men to individual leaders. Such, however, was the case here. It was not of Lord Castlereagh, nor Mr. Cook, nor even of the dearer names of Flood and Grattan, or Ponsonby, the people were now thinking; their minds were bent upon the thought whether Ireland was to be a nation and Dublin a capital, or whether they were to sink for ever to the humble condition of a province, deserted by all that gave splendour and distinction to the land, and politically to be of less weight than an English county.

If the newspapers had not exhibited much delicacy and forbearance in discussing the negotiation, real or supposed, between the Government and the various Members who were regarded as their supporters, the people at large were not slow in remembering and retailing the scandals that they thus acquired, and many a Ministerial adherent had to listen to much unpalatable comment on his character as his carriage proceeded, at a foot-pace, through the crowded streets on that eventful morning.

"Come, Mr. Massy, you were paid this morning; give us a tenpenny-bit to drink your health." "Success to you, my Lord Ely; it's yourself made the hard bargain, and it's a credit to us all. You didn't sell your country too cheap." "Three cheers for Sir William, boys; he bargained to be a peer when there's to be no lords at all." "He's new-come-in (New-comen), and he'll soon go out," cried another. "Here's Harry Deane Grady, boys; how much did they mark on your brief, Harry?

Ye're counsel for the Crown, ye know." "Ay, for the half crown, too," cried another, amidst shouts of derisive laughter. Such and such like were the courtesies of the mob through which the struggling members made their way to the House, some of them by no means sorry that the manifestations went no further than coarse jestings.

Though the House met at five o'clock, there were but few Members in their places. The greater number congregated in the lobbies in earnest confabulation, and groups of six or seven were seen to loiter outside the walls, under the colonnade, conferring eagerly together, and at times speaking with what seemed passionate excitement. These knots were eagerly watched by the crowd, and being always of the "national" party, they were observed with all the sympathy and respect of the bystanders, insomuch that even a decorous silence was maintained by the mob around, as though they would not disturb the consultations of those who were friends to Ireland. Another strange trait marked this rude gathering of men whose looks and dress clearly bespoke them of the lowest class of the city, and this was the courteous manner in which they made way for the ladies, who had to descend from their carriages near the gate of the college and proceed on foot to the entrance of the "House."

Many of these were the wives or connexions of men belonging to the Government party, and so far obnoxious to the national sentiment; but in no case were they molested, nor was a rude word or a coarse speech uttered as they passed. That chivalrous respect for ladies which the gentlemen of the time observed so faithfully, had evidently filtered down into humbler orders of the community, and was even found in the very humblest; and this good breeding, be it remembered, was observed at a time when the splendour and extravagance of female dress had attained its summit, and when contrasts with the rags of misery were not uncommonly the themes the small newspapers of the capital delighted in. Still, as the costly velvets and rustling brocades brushed past, not a murmur of discontent was heard, and a file of courtiers could not have exhibited a more polished deference and respect than that motley crowd of ragged and wretched men. Once only was the stillness broken; there was a low murmur of admiring delight as the Secretary, Cook, made way for Lady Castlereagh to pass, and it almost became a sort of cheer as that queenly beauty swept by, her pale face heightened in its charm by the slight flush which the situation, or the coming event, had evoked.

There is not a land in Europe in which personal attractions have the same charm for the people, or exert the same influence as in Ireland. No rancour of party, no violence of sect, can withstand the influences of Beauty. The old Greek leaven thus lingers in the land, and tempers the natures tried by many a hardship, and soured by many a sorrow. What share their religion and their Mariolatry have in this sentiment I leave to others to speculate on.

It was seven before the debate was opened, and even then, such was the bustle of canvass that still went forward in the corridors, such the

excited sound of voices without, that it was only after several calls of order that silence was enforced.

"And it is this bear-garden," muttered Lord Castlereagh to General Lake, who sat beside him, "whose existence we are now about to contend for."

The words were overheard, and taken down in pencil, and handed to George Ponsonby, to be made use of in his speech.

Many who had been absent on the first debate were now present, and the House was crowded in every part. In the gallery were all that Dublin contained of fashion and beauty, arrayed, as their costumes and colours showed, not merely as spectators, but as zealous partisans; and on the back benches the students of Trinity, eager and excited watchers of a scene which was to decide, in a great measure, the whole future of their own careers. Never were the various elements of society more closely thrown together than in that assemblage, which waited with breathless anxiety for the debate to begin. The intense anxiety was increased, too, by the uncertainty which prevailed as to the opinions of many who had not been present at the previous debate, but were now seen within the House.

"How is Dick Quin going?" "What will Charles Osborne do?" "Is Frank M'Namara safe?" were buzzed about in whispers, and the faces of men were scanned with a scrutiny that seemed to imply that their fidelity or their treachery could not be concealed from view.

"Look at Ross Mahon," muttered one; "did you ever see a man so nervous?"

"Well he may be. He came down here with Marcus Beresford; and we know what that means."

"Bingham looks happy enough, at all events. He has made his bargain, and likes it."

"There's the 'Right Honourable' bustling in now. Whenever he has that fighting face on it means treachery."

This was said in reference to the Right Hon. Denis Brown, who was as well known by his title of Privy Councillor as Wellington by his designation of "the Duke."

In a country where every public man was well known, not merely as a politician or a party leader, but in every circumstance of his private life, and in every detail of his fortune, it would be impossible to conceal his corruption, if he once had stooped to traffic for his honour. That such a man had paid off his mortgage or redeemed his bond, that such another was about to finish the building of the house that had stood half completed for years, that this man's brother was to be the new bishop, and that other man's father-in-law was to be a judge, very quickly prepared the world for the fact on which side of the House he would be found.

Corruption was very barefaced, not only because it was widespread, but that, concealment being impossible, men took to discussing their

bargains with a shameless effrontery, all the more since a considerable sum had been voted by the English House under the name of "compensation" for the loss which members might incur in the forfeiture of their borough interests; and this legalized bribery became a pretext for many more questionable dealings.

The debate, from its very opening, showed that a spirit of personal defiance was abroad, and that men intended to carry the purpose of their words beyond the walls of the House. Lord Castlereagh himself was attacked by four speakers in turn, and with a savage acrimony that was unbefitting a deliberative assembly. The violent tone of these personalities was such that the speech of Sir John Parnell, admirably reasoned and logical as it was, seemed weak, tame, and spiritless after those angry and insulting denunciations which men knew could only be replied to on the field. George Ponsonby's attack on the Minister was all the more astounding as none had ever suspected what intense power and passion lay under the ordinary exterior of his gentle, placid nature. Sarcasm and irony were certainly not expected from him, and yet these were as much at his command as fervid denunciation and indignant rebuke.

Contemptuously ignoring the attacks of the previous speakers, Lord Castlereagh limited himself in his reply to Ponsonby's speech, and for once, and only once, roused and excited by passion, he astonished the House by the vigour and power of his reply. The defect of coldness and insipid languor which so often disfigured his speeches, was no longer to be found. He was stung to the quick, and he displayed a fervid, fluent eloquence that actually electrified the House. There was scarcely a leading man of the Opposition at whom he did not hurl a defiance, arraigning some act of his political career, and calling in question some vote he had given. It was pretty plain on what terms the debate was to be conducted, and the cheers and counter-cheers declared how each side accepted the encounter.

There were many able speakers on the Government benches. Sir William Smith, in particular, distinguished himself in maintaining the competence of Parliament to deal with the question; this being the very point to which Plunket directed all the power of his unrivalled eloquence. So exhaustive and complete was this speech, that though the debate continued for hours after, all felt that the fatal blow had been already given, and that though men might weaken, they could not possibly add to the effect of that, the greatest effort of oratory ever heard within those walls.

Sir Jonah Barrington having, in an early part of the debate, spoken of the corruption practised by the Government, Mr. Corry appealed to the Speaker, "that his words should be taken down." "Sir," said Plunket "the gentlemen opposite are men of nice and punctilious honour, and they will not endure anything which implies reflection on their untainted and virgin integrity. They threatened to take down the words of an honourable gentleman who spoke before me because they conveyed an insinuation. I

promised them then that if that fancy continued I would indulge them to the top of their bent. Do you choose to take down my words when I assert that, weak and wicked as is the object proposed, the means taken to effect it have been more abominable and flagitious?"

The insult to the Chief Secretary, however, reached its climax when he said :—

"The example of the Prime Minister of England, imitable in his vices, may deceive the noble lord. The Minister of England has his faults; he abandoned in his latter years the principle of reform, by professing which he had attained the early confidence of the people, and in the whole of his political career he has shown himself haughty and intractable; but he is endowed by nature with a towering and transcendent intellect, and the vastness of his resources keeps pace with the magnificence and unboundedness of his projects. I thank God it is easier for the honourable gentleman to transfer his apostacy and his insolence than his comprehension and his sagacity, and I feel the safety of my country in the wretched feebleness of her enemy! I cannot fear that the Constitution which has been founded by the wisdom of sages, and cemented by the blood of patriots and heroes, is to be smitten to the centre by such a green and sapless twig as this."

There was a savage malignity in the personality of the concluding words that stung Lord Castlereagh beyond all endurance.

"I ask you, are you competent to transfer your legislative rights to the French Council of Five Hundred? Can you transfer them to the British Parliament? I answer, No. When you transfer you abdicate. The grant must revert to the people from whom it originated. Yourselves you may extinguish, but Parliament you cannot extinguish. It is enthroned in the hearts of the people. It is enshrined in the Constitution. It is immortal in the island which it protects. As well might the frantic suicide hope that the act which destroys his miserable body should extinguish his eternal soul!"

The words with which Lord Castlereagh wound up his reply will rather surprise those whose knowledge of parliamentary language is limited to a later period :—

"I reprobate the personalities used by gentlemen in this debate. I deprecate a contest of this nature. But if any gentleman conceives himself injured by any gentleman on this side of the House, there is a remedy within his reach, which I am proud to say there is no one on these benches will not willingly extend to him."

Cheers and counter-cheers followed this audacious declaration, and for a few minutes nothing could look less like a great deliberative assembly than that mass of excited men, who with loud voice and defiant gesture seemed carried away beyond all bounds of decorum and self-respect.

At that time Henry Grattan had no seat in the House, but a vacancy occurring in Wicklow, the borough was offered to Grattan by Mr. Tighe. The Government, fully alive to the peril of his presence in Parliament,

deferred the issue of the writ to the latest moment allowed by law, and when it was fully believed it would be too late to allow of Grattan taking part in the debate. By immense exertion, and by an exercise of illegality to which the Government had given the example, the election was held on the very day the writ arrived. The voters were all ready and at the poll. Grattan was returned at once, and before midnight was on his way to Dublin, and actually entered the House at seven in the evening, when the debate was in full discussion.

George Ponsonby and Arthur Moore rose, and hurriedly quitted their places, and speedily returned, supporting between them the feeble figure of a man wasted by illness and bowed down with suffering, whose tottering limbs could scarcely carry him to his seat. As he passed up the whole House rose in silent homage to the man who had turned, as it were, from the very brink of the grave to give his last warning to his country. Mr. Egan, who had been speaking, ceased to address the House, and Grattan rose with difficulty and tried to speak; he faltered, however, and feeling himself too weak to stand, he humbly requested he might speak sitting.

The House acceded by a cry to this affecting appeal, and the old man, in tones at first scarcely audible, but which gathered force as he went on, delivered a speech, which in his days of vigorous power and force had never been surpassed. For two hours he held the hearers enthralled by a varied eloquence, miraculous to those who were new to his wonderful powers, and affecting to all who saw the suffering condition of the speaker.

From the defective reporting of the time we are, unhappily, not possessed of any faithful record of this great effort, but from one or two witnesses who survived to within a few years ago, I have heard that such was the effect of the speech that, when he concluded, Lord Castlereagh sat pale and motionless for some seconds, and then beckoning Mr. Corry to him, whispered, eagerly, a few words, and muttered out "Adjournment." A fierce cry of "Go on! Go on!" from the Opposition, however, was a challenge that could not be declined, and Corry rose to reply. He moved the adjournment. The division followed, and a majority of forty-two for the Government virtually decided the fate of Ireland.

Puritanism and the Church of England.

We spoke lately of Protestantism, and how, with its three notable tenets of predestination, original sin, and justification, it has been pounding away for three centuries at St. Paul's wrong words, and missing his essential doctrine. And we took Puritanism to stand for Protestantism, and addressed ourselves directly to the Puritans; for the Puritan churches, we said, seem to exist specially for the sake of these doctrines, one or more of them. It is true, many Puritans now profess also the doctrine that it is wicked to have a church connected with the State; but this is a later invention, designed to strengthen a separation previously made. We will notice it in due course; but meanwhile, we say that the aim at setting forth certain Protestant doctrines purely and integrally is the main title on which Puritan churches rest their right of existing. With historic churches, like those of England or Rome, it is, we said, otherwise; these doctrines may be in them, may be a part of their traditions, their theological stock; but certainly no one will say that either of these churches was made for the express purpose of upholding these three theological doctrines, jointly or severally. People are not necessarily monarchists or republicans because they are born and live under a monarchy or republic. They avail themselves of the established government for those general purposes for which governments and polities exist, but they do not, for the most part, trouble their heads much about particular theoretical principles of government; nay, it may well happen that a man who lives and thrives under a monarchy shall yet theoretically disapprove the principle of monarchy, or a man who lives and thrives under a republic, the principles of republicanism. But a man, or body of men, who have gone out of an established polity from zeal for the principle of monarchy or republicanism, and have set up a polity of their own for the very purpose of giving satisfaction to this zeal, are in a false position whenever it shall appear that the principle from zeal for which they have constituted their separate existence is unsound. Predestinarianism and solifidianism, Calvinism and Lutherism, may appear in the theology of a national or historic Church, charged ever since the rise of Christianity with the task of developing the immense and complex store of ideas contained in Christianity; and when the stage of development has been reached at which the unsoundness of predestinarian and solifidian dogmas becomes manifest, they will be dropped out of the Church's theology, and she and her task will remain what they were before. But when people from zeal for these dogmas find their historic Church not predestinarian or solifidian enough for them, and make new associations of their own,

which shall be predestinarian or solifidian absolutely, then, when the dogmas are undermined, the associations are undermined too, and have either to own themselves without a reason for existing, or to discover some new reason in place of the old. Now, nothing which exists likes to be driven to a strait of this kind; so every association which exists because of zeal for the dogmas of election or justification, will naturally cling to these dogmas longer and harder than other people. Therefore we treated the Puritan bodies in this country as the great stronghold here of these doctrines; and in showing what a perversion of Paul's real ideas these doctrines commonly called Pauline are, we addressed ourselves to the Puritans.

But those who speak in the Puritans' name say that we charge upon Puritanism, as a sectarian peculiarity, doctrine which is not only the inevitable result of an honest interpretation of the writings of St. Paul, but which is, besides, the creed held in common by Puritans and by all the churches of Christendom, with one insignificant exception. To saddle Puritanism in special with this doctrine is, they say, a piece of unfairness which has its motive in mere ill-will to Puritanism, a device which can injure nobody but its author.

Now, we have tried to show that the Puritans are quite wrong in imagining their doctrine to be the inevitable result of an honest interpretation of St. Paul's writings. That they are wrong we think is certain; but so far are we from being moved, in anything that we do or say in this matter, by ill-will to Puritanism and the Puritans, that it is, on the contrary, just because of our hearty respect for them, and from our strong sense of their value, that we speak as we do. Certainly we consider them to be in the main, at present, an obstacle to progress and to true civilization. But this is because their worth is, in our opinion, such that not only must one for their own sakes wish to see it turned to more advantage, but others, from whom they are now separated, would greatly gain by conjunction with them, and our whole collective force of growth and progress be thereby immeasurably increased. In short, our one feeling, when we regard them, is a feeling, not of ill-will, but of regret at waste of power; our one desire is a desire of comprehension. But the waste of power must continue, and the comprehension is impossible, so long as Puritanism imagines itself to possess, in its two or three signal doctrines, what it calls *the gospel*; so long as it constitutes itself separately on the plea of setting forth purely *the gospel*, which it thus imagines itself to have seized; so long as it judges others as not holding *the gospel*, or as holding additions to it and variations from it. This fatal self-righteousness, grounded on a false conceit of knowledge, makes comprehension impossible; because it assumes the possession of the truth and the power of deciding how others violate it; and this is a position of superiority, and suits conquest rather than comprehension. The good of comprehension in a national Church is that the larger and more various the body of members, the more elements of power and life the Church will contain, the more points there will be of contact, the more mutual support

and stimulus, the more growth in perfection both of thought and practice. The waste of power from not comprehending the Puritans in the national Church is measured by the number and value of elements which Puritanism could supply towards the collective growth of the whole body. The national Church would grow more vigorously towards a higher stage of insight into religious truth, and consequently towards a greater perfection of practice, if it had these elements; and this is why we wish for the Puritans in the Church. But, meanwhile, Puritanism will not contribute to the common growth, mainly because it believes that a certain set of opinions or scheme of theological doctrine is *the gospel*; that it is possible and profitable to extract this, and that Puritans have done so; and that it is the duty of men, who like themselves have extracted it, to separate themselves from those who have not, and to set themselves apart that they may profess it purely. To disabuse them of this error, which, by preventing collective life, prevents also collective growth, it was necessary to show them that their extracted scheme of theological doctrine is not really the gospel; and that at any rate, therefore, it is not worth their while to separate themselves, and to frustrate the hope of growth in common, merely for this scheme's sake. And even if it were true, as they allege, that the national and historic Churches of Christendom do equally with Puritanism hold this scheme, or main parts of it, still it would be to Puritanism, and not to the historic Churches, that in showing the invalidity and unscripturalness of this scheme we should address ourselves, because the Puritan Churches found their very existence on it, and the historic Churches do not. And not founding their existence on it, nor falling into separatism for it, the historic Churches have a collective life which is very considerable, and a power of growth, even in respect of the very scheme of doctrine in question, supposing them to hold it, far greater than any which the Puritan Churches show, but which would be yet greater and more fruitful still, if the historic Churches combined the large and admirable contingent of Puritanism with their own forces. Therefore, as we have said, it is out of no sort of malice or ill-will, but from esteem for their fine qualities and from desire for their help, that we have addressed ourselves to the Puritans. And to make this perfectly clear, we propose to conclude our dealings with this subject by showing how, as a matter of fact, the Church of England (which is the historic Church practically in question so far as Puritanism is concerned) seems to us to have displayed with respect to those very tenets which we have criticised, and for which we are said to have unfairly made Puritanism alone responsible, a continual power of growth which has been wanting to the Puritan congregations. This we propose to show first; and we will show secondly, how, from the very theory of a historic or national Church, the probability of this greater power of growth seems to follow, that we may try and commend that theory a little more to the thoughts and favour of our Puritan friends.

The two great Puritan doctrines which we have criticised at such

length are the doctrines of predestination and justification. Of the aggressive and militant Puritanism of our people, predestination has, almost up to the present day, been the favourite and distinguishing doctrine; it was the doctrine which Puritan flocks greedily sought, which Puritan ministers powerfully preached, and called others *carnal gospellers* for not preaching. This Geneva doctrine accompanied the Geneva discipline; Puritanism's first great wish and endeavour was to establish both the one and the other in the Church of England, and it became nonconforming because it failed. Now it is well known that the High Church divines of the seventeenth century were Arminian, that the Church of England was the stronghold of Arminianism, and that Arminianism is, as we have said, an effort of man's practical good sense to get rid of what is shocking to it in Calvinism. But what is not so well known, and what is eminently worthy of remark, is the constant pressure applied by Puritanism upon the Church of England, to put the Calvinistic doctrine more distinctly into her formularies, and to tie her up more strictly to this doctrine; the constant resistance offered by the Church of England, and the large degree in which Nonconformity is really due to this cause. Everybody knows how far Nonconformity is due to the Church of England's rigour in imposing an explicit declaration of adherence to her formularies. But only a few who have searched out the matter know how far Nonconformity is due, also, to the Church of England's invincible reluctance to narrow her large and loose formularies to the strict Calvinistic sense dear to Puritanism. Yet this is what the record of conferences shows, at least as signally as it shows the domineering spirit of the High Church clergy; but our current political histories, written always with an anti-ecclesiastical bias, which is natural enough inasmuch as the Church party was not the party of civil liberty, leaves this singularly out of sight. Yet there is a very catena of testimonies to prove it; to show us, from Elizabeth's reign to Charles the Second's, Calvinism, as a power both within and without the Church of England, trying to get decisive command of her formularies; and the Church of England, with the instinct of a body meant to live and grow, and averse to fetter and engage its future, steadily resisting. The Lambeth Articles of 1595 exhibit Calvinism potent in the Church of England herself, and among the bishops of the Church. True; but could it establish itself there? No; the Articles were recalled and suppressed, and Archbishop Whitgift was threatened with the penalties of a *præmunire* for having published them. It was usual from 1552 onwards to print in the English Bibles a catechism asserting the Calvinistic doctrine of absolute election and reprobation. In the first Bibles of the authorised version (1607-10) this catechism appeared; but it was removed in 1615. Yet the Puritans had met James the First, at his accession in 1603, with the petition that *there may be an uniformity of doctrine prescribed;* meaning an uniformity in the sense of strict Calvinism. The Church, as regards doctrine, was for opening; Puritanism was for narrowing.

Then came, in 1604, the Hampton Court Conference. Here, as usual, political historians reproach the Church with having conceded so little. These historians, as we have said, think solely of the Puritans as the religious party favourable to civil liberty, and on that account desire the preponderance of Puritanism in its disputes with the Church. But, as regards freedom of thought and truth of ideas, what was it that the Church was pressed by Puritanism to concede, and what was the character and tendency of the Church's refusal? The first Puritan petition at this Conference was "that the *doctrine* of the Church might be preserved in purity according to God's Word." That is, according to the Calvinistic interpretation put upon God's Word by Calvin and the Puritans after him, an interpretation which we have shown to be erroneous and unscriptural. This Calvinistic doctrine of predestination the Puritans wanted to plant hard and fast in the Church's formularies, and the Church resisted. The Puritan foreman complained of the loose wording of the Thirty-nine Articles because it allowed an escape from the strict doctrine of Calvinism, and moved that the Lambeth Articles, strictly Calvinistic, might be inserted into the Book of Articles. The Bishops resisted, and here are the words of their spokesman, the Bishop of London. "The Bishop of London answered, that too many in those days, neglecting holiness of life, *laid all their religion upon predestination*—'If I shall be saved, I shall be saved,' which he termed a desperate doctrine, showing it to be contrary to good divinity, which teaches us to reason rather *ascendendo* then *descendendo*, thus, 'I live in obedience to God, in love with my neighbour, I follow my vocation, &c., therefore I trust that God hath elected me and predestinated me to salvation;' not thus, which is the usual course of argument, 'God hath predestinated and chosen me to life, therefore, though I sin never so grievously, I shall not be damned, for whom he once loveth he loveth to the end.'" Who will deny that this resistance of the Church to the Puritans, who, *laying all their religion upon predestination*, wanted to make the Church do the same, was as favourable to growth of thought and to sound philosophy, as it was consonant to good sense?

We have already, on a previous occasion, quoted from the complaints against the Church by the committee of divines appointed by the House of Lords in 1641, when Puritanism was strongly in the ascendent. Some in the Church teach, say the Puritan complainers, "that good works are concauses with faith in the act of justification; some have oppugned the certitude of salvation; some have maintained that the Lord's day is kept merely by ecclesiastical constitution; some have defended the whole gross substance of Arminianism, that the act of conversion depends upon the concurrence of men's free will; some have denied original sin; some have broached out of Socinus a most uncomfortable and desperate doctrine, that late repentance,—that is, upon the last bed of sickness,—is unfruitful, at least to reconcile the penitent to God." What we insist upon is, that the growth and movement of

thought, on religious matters, are here shown to be in the Church; and that on these two cardinal doctrines of predestination and justification, with which we are accused of unfairly saddling Puritanism alone, Puritanism did really want to make the national religion hinge, while the Church did not, but resisted. The resistance was at that time vanquished, not by importing strict Calvinism into the Prayer Book, but by casting out the Prayer Book altogether. By ordinance in 1645, the use of the Prayer Book, which for churches had already been forbidden, was forbidden also for all private places and families; all copies to be found in churches were to be delivered up, and heavy penalties were imposed on persons found with them.

We come to the occasion where the Church is thought to have most decisively shown her unyieldingness,—the Savoy Conference in 1661, after King Charles the Second's restoration. The question was, what alterations were to be made in the Prayer Book, so as to enable the Puritans to use it as well as the Church party. Having in view doctrine and free development of thought, we say again it was the Puritans who were for narrowing, it was the Churchmen who were for keeping open. Their heads full of these tenets of predestination, original sin, and justification, which we are accused of charging upon them exclusively and unfairly, the Puritans complain that the Church Liturgy seems very defective,—why? because "the systems of doctrine of a church should summarily comprehend all such doctrines as are necessary to be believed," and the liturgy does not set down these explicitly enough. For instance, "the Confession," they say, "is very defective, not clearly expressing original sin. The Catechism is defective as to many necessary doctrines of our religion, some even of the essentials of Christianity not being mentioned except in the Creed, and there not so explicit as ought to be in a catechism." And what is the answer of the bishops? It is the answer of people with an instinct that this definition and explicitness demanded by the Puritans are incompatible with the conditions of life of a historic church. "The Church," they say, "hath been careful to put nothing into the Liturgy but that which is either evidently the Word of God, or what hath been generally received in the Catholic Church. The Catechism is not intended as a whole body of divinity." The Puritans had requested that "the Church prayers might contain *nothing questioned by pious, learned, and orthodox persons.*" Seizing on this expression, wherein is contained the ground of that *separatism for opinions* which we have shown to be so fatal not only to Church life but also to the natural growth of religious thought, the bishops ask, and in the very language of good sense: "Who are *pious, learned, and orthodox persons?* Are we to take for such all who shall confidently affirm themselves to be such? If by orthodox be meant those who adhere to Scripture and the Catholic consent of antiquity, we do not yet know that any part of our Liturgy has been questioned by such. It was the wisdom of our reformers to draw up *such a liturgy as neither Romanist nor Protestant could justly except*

against. Persons want the book to be altered for their own satisfaction." This allegation respecting the character of the Liturgy is undoubtedly true, for the Puritans themselves expressly admitted its truth, and urged this as a reason for altering the Liturgy. It is in consonance with what is so often said, and truly said, of the Thirty-nine Articles, that they are *articles of peace*. This, indeed, makes the Articles scientifically worthless; for metaphysical propositions, such as they in the main are, drawn up with a studied design for their being vague and loose, can have no metaphysical value. But no one then thought of doing without metaphysical articles; so to make them articles of peace showed a true conception of the conditions of life and growth in a church. The readiness to put a lax sense on subscription is a proof of the same disposition of mind. Chillingworth's judgment about the meaning of subscription is well known. "For the Church of England, I am persuaded that the constant doctrine of it is so pure and orthodox, that whosoever believes it and lives according to it, undoubtedly he shall be saved; and that there is no error in it which may necessitate or warrant any man to disturb the peace or renounce the communion of it. *This, in my opinion, is all that is intended by subscription.*" And Laud, a very different man from Chillingworth, held on this point a like opinion with him.

Certainly the Church of England was in no humour, at the time of the Savoy Conference, to deal tenderly with the Puritans. It was too much disposed to show to the Puritans the same sort of tenderness which the Puritans had shown to the Church. The nation, moreover, was nearly as ill-disposed as the Church to the Puritans; and this proves well what the narrowness and tyrannousness of Puritanism dominant had really been. But the Church undoubtedly said and did to Puritanism after the Restoration much that was harsh and bitter, and therefore inexcusable in a Christian Church. Examples of Churchmen so speaking and dealing may be found in the transactions of 1661; but perhaps the most offensive example of a Churchman of this kind, and who deserves therefore to be studied, is a certain Dr. Jane, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford and Dean of Gloucester, who was put forward to thwart Tillotson's projects of comprehension in 1689. A certain number of Dr. Janes there have always been in the Church; there are a certain number of them in the Church now, and there always will be a certain number of them. No Church could exist with many of them; but one should have a sample or two of them always before one's mind, and remember how, to the excluded party, a few, and those the worst, of their excluders are always apt to stand for the whole, in order to comprehend the full bitterness and resentment of Puritanism against the Church of England. Else, one would be inclined to say, after attentively and impartially observing the two parties, that the persistence of the Church in pressing for conformity arose, not as the political historians would have it, from the lust of haughty ecclesiastics for dominion and for imposing their law on the

vanquished, but from a real sense that their formularies were made so large and open, and the sense put upon subscription to them so indulgent, that any reasonable man could honestly conform, and that it was perverseness and determination to impose their special ideas on the Church, and to narrow the Church's latitude, which made the Puritans stand out. We could wish, indeed, the Church had shown the same largeness in consenting to relax ceremonies, which she showed in refusing to tighten dogma. Worse still, the angry wish to drive by violence, when the other party will not move by reason, finally no doubt appears; and the Church has much to blame herself for in the Act of Uniformity. Blame she deserves, and she has had it plentifully; but what has not been enough perceived is, that really the conviction of her own moderation, openness, and latitude, as far as regards doctrine, seems to have filled her mind during her dealings with the Puritans; and that her impatience with them was in great measure impatience at seeing these so ill-appreciated by them. Very ill-appreciated by them they certainly were; and, as far as doctrine is concerned, the quarrel between the Church and Puritanism undoubtedly was, that for the doctrines of predestination, original sin, and justification, Puritanism wanted more exclusive prominence, more dogmatic definition, more bar to future escape and development; while the Church resisted.

And as the instinct of the Church always made her avoid, on these three favourite tenets of Puritanism, the stringency of definition which Puritanism tried to force upon her, always made her leave herself room for growth in regard to them,—so, if we look for the positive beginnings and first signs of growth, of disengagement from the stock notions of popular theology about predestination, original sin, and justification, it is among Churchmen, and not among Puritans, that we shall find them. Few will deny that as to the doctrines of predestination and original sin, at any rate, the mind of religious men is no longer what it was in the seventeenth century or in the eighteenth; there has been evident growth and emancipation; Puritanism itself no longer holds these doctrines in the rigid way it once did. To whom is this change owing? who were the beginners of it? They were men using that comparative openness of mind and accessibility to ideas which was fostered by the Church. The very complaints which we have quoted from the Puritan divines prove that this was so. Henry More, saying in the heat of the Calvinistic controversy, what it needed insight to say then, but what almost every one's common sense says now, that "it were to be wished the Quinquarticular points were all reduced to this one, namely, *That none shall be saved without sincere obedience;*" Jeremy Taylor saying in the teeth of the superstitious popular doctrine of original sin: "Original sin, as it is at this day commonly explicated, was not the doctrine of the primitive church; but when Pelagius had puddled the stream, St. Austin was so angry that he stamped and puddled it more,"—this sort of utterance from Churchmen it was, that first introduced into our religious world the current of more independent thought concerning the doctrines of predestination

and original sin, which has now made its way even amidst Puritans themselves. Here the emancipation has reached the Puritans; but it proceeded from the Church. That Puritanism is yet emancipated from the popular doctrine of justification cannot be asserted. On the contrary, the more it loosens its hold on the doctrine of predestination the more it tightens it on that of justification. We have already quoted Wesley's words: "*Plead thou solely the blood of the Covenant, the ransom paid for thy proud stubborn soul!*" and we have shown how modern Methodism glories in holding aloft as its standard this teaching of Wesley's, and this teaching above all. The many tracts which have lately been sent me in reference to this subject go all the same way. Like Luther, they hold that "all heretics have continually failed in this one point, that they do not rightly understand or know the article of *justification:*" "do not see" (to continue to use Luther's words,) "that by none other sacrifice or offering could God's fierce anger be appeased, but by the precious blood of the Son of God." That this doctrine is founded upon an entire misunderstanding of St. Paul's writings we have shown; that there is very visible a tendency in the minds of religious people to outgrow it, is true, but where alone does this tendency manifest itself with any steadiness or power? In the Church. The inevitable movement of growth will in time extend itself to Puritanism also; let it be remembered in that day that not only does the movement come to Puritanism from the Church, but it comes to Churchmen of our century from a seed of growth and development inherent in the Church, and which was manifest long ago. That the accompaniments of the doctrine of justification, the tenets of conversion, instantaneous sanctification, assurance, and sinless perfection,—tenets which are not the essence of Wesley, but which are the essence of Wesleyan Methodism, and which have in them so much that is delusive and dangerous,—that these should have been discerningly judged by that mixture of piety and sobriety which marks Anglicans of the best type, such as Bishop Wilson,* will surprise no one. But years before Wesley was born, the fontal doctrine itself, — Wesley's "*Plead thou solely the blood of the Covenant!*"—had been criticised by Hammond thus, and the signal of deliverance from the Lutheran doctrine of justification given: "The solifidian looks upon his faith as the utmost accomplishment and end, and not only as the first elements of his task, which is—*the superstructing of good life.* The solifidian believes himself to have the only sanctified necessary doctrines, that having them renders his condition safe, and every man who believes them a pure Christian professor. In respect of solifidianism it is worth remembering what Epiphanius observes of the primitive times, that *wickedness was the only heresy*, that impious and pious living divided the whole Christian world into erroneous and orthodox."

* For example: what an antidote to the perilous Methodist doctrine of instantaneous sanctification is this saying of Bishop Wilson: "He who fancies that his mind may effectually be changed in a short time, deceives himself."

In point of fact, therefore, the historic Church in England, not existing for special opinions, but proceeding by development, has shown much greater freedom of mind as regards the doctrines of election, original sin, and justification, than the Nonconformists have; and has refused, in spite of Puritan pressure, to tie herself too strictly to these doctrines, to make them all in all. She thus both has been and is more serviceable than Puritanism to religious progress; because the separating for opinions, which is proper to Puritanism, rivets the separatist to those opinions, and is thus opposed to that development and gradual exhibiting of the full sense of the Bible and Christianity, which is essential to religious progress. To separate for the doctrine of predestination, of justification, of scriptural Church-discipline, is to be false to the idea of development, to imagine that you can seize the absolute sense of Scripture from your own present point of view, and to cut yourself off from growth and gradual illumination. That a comparison between the course things have taken in Puritanism and in the Church goes to prove the truth of this as a matter of fact, is what I have been trying to show hitherto; in what remains I purpose to show how, as a matter of theory and antecedent likelihood, it seems probable and natural that so this should be.

A historic Church cannot choose but allow the principle of development, for it is written in its institutions and history. An admirable writer, in a book which is one of his least known works, but which contains, perhaps, even a greater number of profound and valuable ideas than any other one of them, has set forth, both persuasively and truly, the impression which Church-history cannot but convey. "We have to account," says Dr. Newman, in his *Essay on Development*, "for that apparent variation and growth of doctrine which embarrasses us when we would consult history for the true idea of Christianity. The increase and expansion of the Christian creed and ritual, and the variations which have attended the process in the case of individual writers and Churches, are the necessary attendants on any philosophy or polity which takes possession of the intellect and heart, and has had any wide or extended dominion. From the nature of the human mind, time is necessary for the full comprehension and perfection of great ideas. The highest and most wonderful truths, though communicated to the world once for all by inspired teachers, could not be comprehended all at once by the recipients; but, as admitted and transmitted by minds not inspired, and through media which were human, have required only the longer time and deeper thought for their full elucidation." And again: "Ideas may remain when the expression of them is indefinitely varied. Nay, one cause of corruption in religion is the refusal to follow the course of doctrine as it moves on, and an obstinacy in the notions of the past. So our Lord found his people precisians in their obedience to the letter; he condemned them for not being led on to its spirit,—that is, its development. The Gospel is the development of the Law; yet what difference seems wider than that which separates the unbending rule of Moses from the grace and truth which came by Jesus

Christ? The more claim an idea has to be considered living, the more various will be its aspects; and the more social and political is its nature, the more complicated and subtle will be its developments, and the longer and more eventful will be its course. Such is Christianity." And yet once more: "It may be objected that inspired documents, such as the Holy Scriptures, at once determine its doctrine without further trouble. But they were intended to create *an idea*, and that idea is not in the sacred text, but in the mind of the reader; and the question is, whether that idea is communicated to him in its completeness and minute accuracy on its first apprehension, or expands in his heart and intellect, and comes to perfection in the course of time. If it is said that inspiration supplied the place of this development in the first recipients of Christianity, still the time at length came when its recipients ceased to be inspired; and on these recipients the revealed truths would fall as in other cases, at first vaguely and generally, and would afterwards be completed by developments."

The notion thus admirably expounded of a gradual understanding of the Bible, a progressive development of Christianity, is the same which was in Bishop Butler's mind when he laid down in his *Analogy* that "the Bible contains many truths as yet undiscovered." "And as," he says, "the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood, so, if it ever comes to be understood, before the restitution of all things and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and of liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped as by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance." And again: "Our existence is not only successive, as it must be of necessity, but one state of our life and being is appointed by God to be a preparation for another, and that to be the means of attaining to another succeeding one; infancy to childhood, childhood to youth, youth to mature age. Men are impatient, and for precipitating things; but the author of nature appears deliberate throughout his operations, accomplishing his natural ends by slow successive steps. Thus, in the daily course of natural providence, God operates in the very same manner as in the dispensation of Christianity; making one thing subservient to another, this to somewhat further; and so on, through a progressive series of means which extend both backward and forward, beyond our utmost view. Of this manner of operation everything we see in the course of nature is as much an instance as any part of the Christian dispensation."

All this is indeed incomparably well said; and with Dr. Newman we may, on the strength of it all, beyond any doubt, "fairly conclude that Christian doctrine admits of formal, legitimate, and true developments;" that "the whole Bible is written on the principle of development."

Dr. Newman, indeed, uses this idea in a manner which seems to us

arbitrary and condemned by the idea itself. He uses it in support of the pretensions of the Church of Rome to an infallible authority on points of doctrine. He says, with great ingenuity, to Protestants: The doctrines you receive are no more on the face of the Bible, or in the plain teaching of the ante-Nicene Church, which alone you consider pure, than the doctrines you reject. The doctrine of the Trinity is a development, as much as the doctrine of Purgatory. Both of them are developments made by the Church, by the post-Nicene Church. The determination of the canon of Scripture, a thing of vital importance to you who acknowledge no authority but Scripture, is a development due to the post-Nicene Church. And thus he would compel Protestants to admit that which is, he declares, in itself reasonable,—namely, "the probability of the appointment in Christianity of an external authority to decide upon the true developments of doctrine and practice in it, thereby separating them from the mass of mere human speculation, extravagance, corruption, and error, in and out of which they grow. This is the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church, of faith and obedience towards the Church, founded on the probability of its never erring in its declarations or commands."

Now, asserted in this absolute way, and extended to doctrine as well as discipline, to speculative thought as well as to Christian practice, Dr. Newman's conclusion seems at variance with his own theory of development, and to be something like an instance of what Bishop Butler criticises when he says: "Men are impatient, and for precipitating things." But Dr. Newman has himself supplied us with a sort of commentary on these words of Bishop Butler's, which is worth quoting, because it throws more light on our point than Bishop Butler's few words can throw on it by themselves. Dr. Newman says: "Development is not an effect of wishing and resolving, or of forced enthusiasm, or of any mechanism of reasoning, or of any mere subtlety of intellect; but comes of its own innate power of expansion within the mind in its season, though with the use of reflection and argument and original thought, more or less as it may happen, with a dependence on the ethical growth of the mind itself, and with a reflex influence upon it." It is impossible to point out more sagaciously and expressively the natural, spontaneous, free character of true development; how such a development must follow laws of its own, may often require vast periods of time, cannot be hurried, cannot be stopped. And so far as Christianity deals,—as, in its metaphysical theology, it does abundantly deal,—with thought and speculation, it must surely be admitted that for its true and ultimate development in this line more time is required, and other conditions have to be fulfilled, than we have had already. So far as Christian doctrine contains speculative philosophical ideas, never since its origin have the conditions been present for determining these adequately; certainly not in the mediæval Church, which so zealously strove to determine them. And thus every creed and council sticks Bishop Butler's sentence: "*The Bible contains many truths as yet undiscovered.*" The Christian religion has practice for its great end and aim; but it raises, as

any one can see, and as Church history proves, numerous and grave questions of philosophy and of scientific criticism. Well, for the true elucidation of such questions, and for their final solution, time and favourable developing conditions are confessedly necessary. From the end of the apostolic age, and of the great fontal burst of Christianity, down to the present time, have such conditions ever existed in the Christian communities, for determining adequately the questions of philosophy and scientific criticism, which the Christian religion starts? *God, creation, will, evil, immortality,*—these terms and many more of the same kind, however much they might in the Bible be used in a concrete and practical manner, yet plainly had in themselves a provocation to abstract thought, carried with them the occasions of a criticism and a philosophy, which must sooner or later make its appearance in the Church. It did make its appearance, and the question is whether it has ever yet appeared there under conditions favourable to its true development. Surely this is best elucidated by considering whether questions of criticism and philosophy in general ever had one of their happy moments, their times for successful development, in the early and middle ages of Christendom at all, or have had one of them in the Christian churches, as such, since. All these questions hang together, and the time that is improper for solving one sort of them truly, is improper for solving the others. Historic criticism, criticism of style, criticism of nature, no one would go to the early or middle ages of the Church for illumination on these matters; how then should those ages develop successfully a philosophy of theology, or criticism of physics and metaphysics, which involves the three others and more besides? Church theology is an elaborate attempt at philosophical criticism; in Greece, before Christianity appeared, there had been a favouring period for the development of such a criticism, a considerable movement of it took place, and considerable results were reached. When Christianity began, this movement was in decadence; it declined more and more till it died quite out; it revived very slowly, and as it waxed, the mediæval Church waned. The doctrine of universals is a question of philosophy discussed in Greece, and re-discussed in the middle ages; whatever light this doctrine receives from Plato's treatment of it, or Aristotle's, in whatever state they left it, will any one say that the Nominalists and Realists brought any more light to it, that they developed it in any way, or could develop it? For the same reason, Augustine's criticism of God's eternal decrees, original sin, and justification, the criticism of St. Thomas Aquinas on them, the decisions of the Church on them, are of necessity, and from the very nature of things, inadequate, because, being philosophical developments, they are made in an age when the forces for true philosophical development are waning or wanting. So when Hooker says most truly: "Our belief in the Trinity, the co-eternity of the Son of God with his Father, the proceeding of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, with other principal points, the necessity whereof is by none denied,

are notwithstanding in Scripture nowhere to be found by express literal mention, only deduced they are out of Scripture by collection"—when Hooker thus points out, what is undoubtedly the truth, that these Church doctrines are developments, we may add this other truth equally undoubted,—that being *philosophical* developments, they are developments of a kind which the Church has never yet had the right conditions for making adequately, any more than it has had the conditions for developing out of what is said in the book of Genesis a true philosophy of nature, or out of what is said in the book of Daniel, a true philosophy of history. And this from no fault at all of the Church, but for the same reason that she was unfitted to solve a difficulty in Aristotle's *Physics* or Plato's *Timæus*, and to determine the historical value of Herodotus or Livy; simply from the natural operation of the law of development, which for success in philosophy and criticism requires certain conditions, which in the early and mediæval Church were not found. And when the movement of philosophy and criticism came with the Renascence, this movement was almost entirely outside the Churches, whether Catholic or Protestant, and not inside them: it worked in men like Descartes and Bacon, and not in men like Luther and Calvin: so that the doctrine of these two eminent personages, so far as it was a philosophical and critical development from Scripture, had no more likelihood of being an adequate development than the doctrine of the Council of Trent. And so it has gone on to this day; philosophy and criticism have become a great power in the world, and inevitably tend to alter and develop Church doctrine, so far as this doctrine is, as to a great extent it is, philosophical and critical; yet the seat of the developing force is not in the Church itself, but elsewhere; its influences filter strugglingly into the Church, and the Church slowly absorbs and incorporates them. And whatever hinders their filtering in and becoming incorporated hinders truth and the natural progress of things.

While, therefore, we entirely agree with Dr. Newman and with the great Anglican divines that the whole Bible is written on the principle of development, and that Christianity in its doctrine and discipline is and must be a development of the Bible, we yet cannot agree that for the adequate development of Christian doctrine, so far as theology exhibits this metaphysically and scientifically, the Church, whether ante-Nicene or post-Nicene, has ever yet furnished a channel. Thought and science follow their own law of development, they are slowly elaborated in the growth and forward pressure of humanity, in what Shakspeare calls—

> . . . . . the prophetic soul
> Of the wide world dreaming on things to come;

and their ripeness and unripeness, as Dr. Newman most truly says, are not an effect of our wishing or resolving. Rather do they seem brought about by a power such as Goethe figures by the *Zeit-Geist* or time-spirit, and St. Paul describes as a divine power *revealing* additions to what we possess already. But sects of men are less apt to receive

them than the main body of men; therefore St. Paul in the same breath exhorts to unity. What may justly be conceded to the Catholic Church is, that in her idea of continuous developing power in united Christendom to work upon the data furnished by the Bible, and produce new combinations from them as the growth of time required it, she followed a true instinct; but the right *philosophical* developments she vainly imagined herself to have the power to produce, and her attempts in this direction were at most but a prophecy of this power, as alchemy is said to have been a prophecy of chemistry.

With developments of discipline and church-order it is very different. The Bible raises, as we have seen, many and great questions of philosophy and criticism; but essentially the Church was not a corporation for speculative purposes, but a corporation for purposes of moral growth and of practice. Terms like *God, creation, will, evil, immortality,* evoke, as we have said, and must evoke, sooner or later, a philosophy; but to evoke this was the accident and not the essence of Christianity. What, then, was the essence? An ingenious writer, as unlike Dr. Newman as it is possible to conceive, has lately told us. In an article in *Fraser's Magazine*,—an article written with great vigour and acuteness,—this writer advises us to return to Paley whom we were beginning to neglect, because the real important essence of Christianity, or rather, to quote quite literally, "the only form of Christianity which is worthy of the serious consideration of rational men, is Protestantism as stated by Paley and his school." And why? "Because this Protestantism enables the saint to prove to the worldly man that Christ threatened him with hell-fire, and proved his power to threaten by rising from the dead and ascending into heaven; and these allegations are the fundamental assertions of Christianity." Now it may be said that this is a somewhat contracted view of "the unsearchable riches of Christ;" but we will not quarrel with it. And this for several reasons: in the first place, it is the view often taken by popular theology; in the second place, it is the view best fitted to serve its Benthamite author's object, which is to get Christianity out of the way altogether; in the third place, its shortness gives us courage to try and do what is the hardest thing in the world, namely, to pack a statement of the main drift of Christianity into a few lines of nearly as short compass. What then was, in brief, the Christian gospel, or "good news?" It was this: *The kingdom of God is come unto you.* The power of Jesus upon the multitudes who heard him gladly was not that by rising from the dead and ascending into heaven he enabled the saint to prove to the worldly man the certainty of hell-fire, (for he had not yet done so); but that *he talked to them about the kingdom of God.* And what is the kingdom of God or kingdom of Heaven? It is this: *God's will done, as in heaven so on earth.* And how was this come to mankind? Because *Jesus is come to save his people from their sins.* And what is being saved from our sins? This: *Entering into the kingdom of heaven by doing the will of our Father which is in heaven.* And how does Christ enable us to do this? By teaching us *to take*

his yoke upon us, and learn of him to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily and follow him. So that St. Paul might say most truly that the seal of the sure foundation of God in Christianity was this: *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity;* or, as he elsewhere expands it: *Let him bring forth the fruits of the Spirit,—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.*

On this foundation arose the Christian Church, and not on any foundation of speculative metaphysics. It was inevitable that the speculative metaphysics should come, but they were not the foundation. When they came, the danger of the Christian Church was that she should take them for the foundation. The people who were built on this foundation, who were united in the joy of Christ's good news, naturally, as they came to know of one another's existence, as their relations with one another multiplied, as the sense of sympathy in the possession of a common treasure deepened,—naturally, I say, drew together in one body, with an organization growing out of the needs of a growing body. It is quite clear that the more strongly Christians felt their common business in setting forward upon earth, through Christ's spirit, the kingdom of God, the more they would be drawn to coalesce into one society for this business, with the natural and true notion that the acting together in this way offers to men greater helps for reaching their aim, presents fewer distractions, and above all, supplies a more animating force of sympathy and mutual assurance, than the acting separately. Only the sense of differences greater than the sense of sympathy could defeat this tendency. Dr. Newman has told us what an impression was once made upon his mind by the sentence: *Securus judicat orbis terrarum.* We have shown how, for matters of philosophical judgment, not yet settled but requiring development to clear them, the consent of the world at a time when this clearing development cannot have happened seems to carry little or no weight at all; indeed, as to judgment on these points, we should rather be inclined to lay down the very contrary of Dr. Newman's affirmation, and to say: *Securus delirat orbis terrarum.* But points of speculative theology being out of the question, and the practical ground and purpose of man's religion being broadly and plainly fixed, we should be quite disposed to concede to Dr. Newman, that *securus colit orbis terrarum;*—they pursue this purpose best who pursue it together. For unless prevented by extraneous causes, they manifestly tend, as the history of the Church's growth shows, to pursue it together. Nonconformists are fond of talking of the unity which may co-exist with separation, and they say: "There are four evangelists, yet one Gospel; why should there not be many separate religious bodies, yet one Church?" But their theory of unity in separation is a theory palpably invented to cover existing facts, and their argument from the evangelists is a paralogism. For the four Gospels arose out of no thought of divergency; they were not designed as corrections of one prior Gospel, or of one another; they were concurring testimonies borne to the same fact. But

the several religious bodies of Christendom plainly grew out of an intention of divergency; clearly they were designed to correct the imperfections of one prior Church and of each other; and to say of things sprung out of discord that they may make *one*, because things sprung out of concord may make *one*, is like saying that because several agreements may make a peace, therefore several wars may make a peace too. No; without some strong motive to the contrary, men united by the pursuit of a clearly defined common aim of irresistible attractiveness naturally coalesce; and since they coalesce naturally, they are clearly right in coalescing, and find their advantage in it.

All that Dr. Newman has so excellently said about development applies here legitimately and fully. Existence justifies additions and stages in existence. The living edifice planted on the foundation, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*, could not but grow, if it lived at all. If it grew, it could not but make developments, and all developments not inconsistent with the aim of its original foundation, and not extending beyond the moral and practical sphere which was the sphere of its original foundation, are legitimated by the very fact of the Church having in the natural evolution of its life and growth made them. A boy does not wear the clothes or follow the ways of an infant, nor a man those of a boy; yet they are all engaged in the one same business of developing their growing life, and to the clothes to be worn and the ways to be followed for the purpose of doing this, nature will, in general, direct them safely. The several scattered congregations of the first age of Christianity coalesced into one community, just as the several scattered Christians had earlier still coalesced into congregations. Why? because such was the natural course of things. It had nothing inconsistent with their fundamental ground, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*, and it was approved by their growing and enlarging in it. They developed a church-discipline with a hierarchy of bishops and archbishops, which was not that of the first times; they developed church-usages, such as the practice of infant baptism, which were not those of the first times; they developed a church-ritual, with ceremonies which were not those of the first times; they developed all these, just as they developed a church-architecture which was not that of the first times, because they were no longer in the first times, and required for their expanding growth what suited their own times. They coalesced with the State because they grew by doing so. They called the faith they possessed in common the *Catholic*, that is, the general or universal faith. They developed, also, as we have seen, dogma or a theological philosophy. Both dogma and discipline became a part of the Catholic faith, or profession of the general body of Christians. To develop a discipline, or form of outward life for itself, the Church, as has been said, had necessarily like every other living thing the requisite qualifications; to develop scientific dogma it had not. But even of the dogma which the Church developed it may be said that, from the very nature of things, it was probably, as compared with the opposing dogma

over which it prevailed, the more suited to the actual condition of the Church's life, and to the due growth of the divine work for which she existed. For instance, whatever may be scientifically the rights of the question about grace and free-will, it is evident that, for the Church of the fifth century, Pelagianism was the less inspiring and edifying doctrine, and the sense of *being in the divine hand* was the feeling which it was good for Christians to be filled with. Whatever may be scientifically the rights of the dispute between Arius and Athanasius, for the church of their time whatever most exalted or seemed to exalt Christ was clearly the profitable doctrine, the doctrine most helpful to that moral life which was the true life of the Church. People, however, there were in abundance who differed on points both of discipline and of dogma from the rule which obtained in the Church, and who separated from her on account of that difference. These were the heretics; *separatists*, as the name implies, *for the sake of opinions*. And the very name, therefore, implies that they were wrong in separating, and that the body which held together was right; because the Church exists, not for the sake of opinions but for the sake of moral practice, and a united endeavour after this is stronger than a broken one. Valentinians, Marcionites, Montanists, Donatists, Manichæans, Novatians, Eutychians, Apollinarians, Arians, Pelagians, if they separated on points of discipline they were wrong, because for developing its own fit outward conditions of life the body of a community has, as we have seen, a real natural power, and individuals are bound to sacrifice their fancies to it; if they separated on points of dogma they were wrong also, because, while neither they nor the Church had the means of determining such points adequately, the true instinct lay in those who, instead of separating for such points, conceded them, as the Church settled them, and found their bond of union, where it in truth really was, not in notions about the co-eternity of the Son, but in the principle, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*. Does any one imagine that all the Church shared Augustine's speculative opinions about grace and predestination? that many members of it did not rather incline as a matter of speculative opinion to the notions of Pelagius? Does any one imagine that all who stood with the Church and did not join themselves to the Arians, were speculatively Athanasians? It was not so; but they had a true feeling for what purpose the Gospel and the Church were given them, and for what they were not given them; that "impious and pious living," according to that sentence of Epiphanius we have quoted from Hammond, "divided the whole Christian world into erroneous and orthodox;" and that it was not worth while to suffer themselves to be divided for anything else. And though it will be said that separatists for opinions on points of discipline and dogma have often asserted, and sometimes believed, that piety and impiety were vitally concerned in these points; yet here again the true religious instinct is that which discerns,—what is seldom so very obscure,—whether they are in truth thus vitally concerned or not; and, if they are not, cannot be perverted into fancying

them concerned and breaking unity for them. This, I say, is the true religious instinct, the instinct which most clearly seizes the essence and aim of the Christian Gospel and of the Christian Church. But fidelity to it leaves, also, the way least closed to the admission of true developments of speculative thought, when the time is come for them, and to their incorporation with the ideas and practice of Christians.

Is there not, then, any separation which is right and reasonable? Yes, separation on plain points of morals; for these involve the very essence of the Christian Gospel, and the very ground on which the Christian Church is built. The sale of indulgences, if deliberately instituted and persisted in by the main body of the Church, afforded a valid reason for breaking unity; the doctrine of purgatory, or of the real presence, did not. Moreover, a cosmopolitan Church order, commenced when the political organization of Christians was also cosmopolitan,—when, that is, the nations of Europe were politically one in the unity of the Roman Empire,—might well occasion difficulties as the nations solidified into independent states, with a keen sense of their independent life; so that, the cosmopolitan type disappearing for civil affairs, and being replaced by the national type, the same disappearance and replacement tended to prevail in ecclesiastical affairs also. This, however, was a political difficulty, not a religious one, and it raised no insuperable bar to continued religious union. A Church with Anglican liberties might well, the English national spirit being what it is, have been in religious communion with Rome, and yet have been safely trusted to maintain and develop its national liberties to any extent required. The moral corruptions of Rome, on the other hand, were a real ground for separation. On their account, and solely on their account, if they could not be got rid of, was separation not only lawful but necessary. It has always been the averment of the Church of England, that the change made in her at the Reformation was the very least change which was absolutely necessary; that she merely got rid of Roman corruptions that were immoral and intolerable, and remained the old, historic, Catholic Church of England still. Thus much, at any rate, may be allowed,—that she kept enough of the past to preserve, as far as this nation was concerned, her continuity, to be still the *historic* Church of England; and that she avoided the error, to which there was so much to draw her, and into which all the other reformed Churches fell, of making improved speculative doctrinal opinions the main ground of her separation. A Nonconformist newspaper, reproaching the Church with what is, in our opinion, her greatest praise, namely, that on points of doctrinal theology she is "a Church that does not know her own mind," roundly asserts that "no man in his senses can deny that the Church of England was meant to be a thoroughly Protestant and Evangelical, and it may be said Calvinistic Church." But not only does the whole course of Church history disprove such an assertion, and show that this is what the Puritans always wanted to make the Church, and what the Church would never be made, but we can disprove it, too, out of the

mouths of the very Puritans themselves. At the Savoy Conference the Puritans urged that "our first reformers out of their great wisdom did at that time (of the Reformation) so compose the Liturgy, as to win upon the Papists, and to draw them into their Church communion *by varying as little as they could from the Romish forms before in use;*" and this they alleged as their great plea for purging the Liturgy. And the Bishops resisted, and upheld the proceeding of the reformers as the essential policy of the Church of England, as indeed it was, and till this day has continued to be. No, the Church of England did not give her energies to inventing a new church-order for herself and fighting for it; to singling out two or three speculative dogmas as the essence of Christianity, and fighting for them. She set herself to carry forward, and as much as possible on the old lines, the old practical work and proper design of the Christian Church; and this is what left her mind comparatively open, as we have seen, for the admission of philosophy and criticism, as they slowly developed themselves outside the Church and filtered into her; an admission which confessedly proves just now of capital importance.

This openness of mind the Puritans have not shared with the Church, and how *should* they have shared it? They are founded on the negation of that idea of development which plays so important a part in the life of the Church; on the assumption that there is a divinely appointed church-order fixed once for all in the Bible, and that they have adopted it; that there is a doctrinal scheme of faith, justification, and imputed righteousness, which is the test of a standing or falling church and the essence of the Gospel, and that they have extracted it. These are assumptions which, as they make union impossible, so also make growth impossible. The Church makes church-order a matter of ecclesiastical constitution, is founded on moral practice, and though she develops speculative dogma, does not allow that this or that dogma is the essence of Christianity. "Congregational Nonconformists," say the Independents, "can never be incorporated into an organic union with Anglican Episcopacy, because there is not even the shadow of an outline of it in the New Testament, and it is our assertion and profound belief that Christ and the Apostles have given us all the laws that are necessary for the constitution and government of the Church." * "Whatever may come," says the President of the Wesleyan Conference, "we are determined to be simple, earnest Preachers of the *Gospel*. Whatever may come, we are determined to be true to *Scriptural Protestantism*. We would be friendly with all evangelical churches, but we will have no fellowship with the man of sin. We will give up life itself rather than be unfaithful to the *truth*. It is ours to cry everywhere: 'Come, sinners, to the *Gospel feast!*'" And this *Gospel*, this *Scriptural Protestantism*, this *truth*, is the doctrine of justification by "pleading solely the blood of the covenant," of which we have said so much. Methodists cannot unite with a church

* Address of the Rev. G. W. Conder at Liverpool, in the *Lancashire Congregational Calendar* for 1869-70.

which does not hold this doctrine of justification, but which holds the doctrine of priestly absolution, of the real presence, and other doctrines of like stamp; Congregationalists cannot unite with a church which, besides not holding the doctrine of justification, has a church-order not prescribed in the New Testament. Now as Hooker truly says of those who "desire to draw all things unto the determination of bare and naked Scripture," as Dr. Newman has said, and as many others have said, the Bible does not exhibit, drawn out in black and white, the precise tenets and usages of any Christian society; some inference and criticism must be employed to get at them. "For the most part, even such as are readiest to cite for one thing five hundred sentences of Scripture, what warrant have they that any one of them doth mean the thing for which it is alleged?" Nay, "it is not the word of God itself which doth, or possibly can, assure us that we do well to think it his word." A process of reasoning and collection is necessary to get at the Scriptural church-discipline and the Scriptural Protestantism of the Puritans; in short, this discipline and this doctrine are developments. And the first is a false development in a matter where there was a power of making a true development, and where the Church made it; the second is a development gathered by unsound process of collection in a matter where neither the Church nor Puritanism had the power of making true developments. But as it is the truth of its Scriptural Protestantism which in Puritanism's eyes especially proves the truth of its Scriptural church-order which has this Protestantism, and the falsehood of the Anglican church-order which has much less of it, to abate the confidence of the Puritans in their Scriptural Protestantism is the first step towards their union, so much to be desired, with the national Church. We say, therefore, that the doctrine: "It is agreed between God and the mediator Jesus Christ the Son of God, surety for the redeemed, as parties-contractors, that the sins of the redeemed should be imputed to innocent Christ, and he both condemned and put to death for them upon this very condition, that whosoever heartily consents unto the covenant of reconciliation offered through Christ shall, by the imputation of his obedience unto them, be justified and holden righteous before God,"—we say that this doctrine is as much a human development from the text, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," as the doctrine of priestly absolution is a human development from the text, "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them," or the doctrine of the real presence from the text, "Take, eat, this is my body." We have shown at length that the received doctrine of justification is an unsound development. It may be said that the doctrine of priestly absolution and of the real presence are unsound developments also. True, in our opinion they are so; they are, like the doctrine of justification, developments made under conditions which precluded the possibility of sound developments in this line. But the difference is here: the Church of England does not identify Christianity with these unsound developments; she does not call either of

them *Scriptural Protestantism*, or *truth*, or *the Gospel*: she does not insist that all who are in communion with her should hold them; she does not repel from her communion those who hold doctrines at variance with them. She treats them as she does the received doctrine of justification, to which she does not tie herself up, but leaves people to hold it if they please. She thus provides room for growth and further change in these very doctrines themselves. But to the doctrine of justification Puritanism ties itself up, just as it tied itself up formerly to the doctrine of predestination; it calls it Scriptural Protestantism, truth, the Gospel; it will have communion with none who do not hold it; it repels communion with any who hold the doctrines of priestly absolution and the real presence, because they seem at variance with it. Yet it is really itself no better than they. But how can growth possibly find place in this doctrine, while it is held in such a fashion?

Every one who perceives and values the power contained in Christianity, must be struck to see how, at the present moment, the progress of this power seems to depend upon its being able to disengage itself from speculative accretions that encumber it. A considerable movement to this end is visible in the Church of England. The most nakedly speculative, and therefore the most inevitably defective, parts of the Prayer Book,—the Athanasian Creed and the Thirty-nine Articles,—our generation will not improbably see the Prayer Book rid of. But the larger the body in which this movement works, the greater is the power of the movement. If the Church of England were dis-established to-day it would be desirable to re-establish her to-morrow, if only because of the immense power for development which a national body possesses. It is because I know something of the Nonconformist ministers, and what eminent force and faculty many of them have for contributing to the work of development now before the Church, that I cannot bear to see the waste of power caused by their separatism and battling with the Establishment, which absorb their energies too much to suffer them to carry forward the work of development themselves, and cut them off from aiding those in the Church who carry it forward. Their political dissent, based on their condemnation of the Anglican church-order as unscriptural, is just one of those speculative accretions which we have spoken of as encumbering religion. Politics are a good thing, and religion is a good thing; but they make a fractious mixture. "The nonconformity of England, and the nonconformity alone, has been the salvation of England from Papal tyranny and kingly misrule and despotism."* This is the favourite boast, the familiar strain; but this is really politics, and not religion at all. But righteousness is religion; and the Nonconformists say: "Who have done so much for righteousness as we?" For as much righteousness as will go with politics, no one; for the sterner virtues, for the virtues of the Jews of the Old Testament; but these are only half of righteousness and not the essentially Christian half, and we have seen how St. Paul tore himself in two, rent his life in the middle and began it again,

* The Rev. G. W. Conder, *ubi supra*.

because he was so dissatisfied with a righteousness which was, after all, in its main features, Puritan. And surely it can hardly be denied that the more eminently and exactly *Christian* type of righteousness is the type exhibited by Church worthies like Herbert, Ken, and Wilson, rather than that exhibited by the worthies of Puritanism; the cause being that the first mixed politics with religion so much less than the second. Paul, too, be it remembered, condemned disunion in the society of Christians as much as he declined politics. This does not, we freely own, make against the Puritans' refusal to take the law from their adversaries, but it does make against their allegation that it does not matter whether the society of Christians is united or not, and that there are even great advantages in separatism. If Anglicans maintained that their Church-order was written in Scripture and a matter of divine command, then, Congregationalists maintaining the same thing, to the controversy between them there could be no end; but now, Anglicans maintaining no such thing, but that their Church-order is a matter of historic development and natural expediency, that it has *grown*,—which is evident enough,—and that the essence of Christianity is in no wise concerned with such matters, why should not the Nonconformists adopt this moderate view of the case, which constrains them to no admission of inferiority, but only to the renouncing an imagined divine superiority and to the recognition of an existing fact, and adopt Church bishops as a development of Catholic antiquity, just as they have adopted Church music and Church architecture, which are developments of the same? Then might there arise a mighty and undistracted power of joint life, which would transform, indeed, the doctrines of priestly absolution and the real presence, but which would transform, equally, the *Scriptural Protestantism* of imputed righteousness, and which would do more for real righteousness and for Christianity than has ever been done yet.

Tillotson's proposals for comprehension, drawn up in 1689, cannot be too much studied at the present juncture. These proposals, with which his name and that of Stillingfleet, two of the most estimable names in the English Church, are specially associated, humiliate no one, refute no one; they take the basis of existing facts, and endeavour to build on it a solid union. They are worth quoting entire, and I conclude with them. Their details our present circumstances might modify; their spirit any sound plan of Church-reform must take as its rule.

"1. That the ceremonies enjoined or recommended in the Liturgy or Canons be left indifferent.

"2. That the Liturgy be carefully reviewed, and such alterations and changes be therein made as may supply the defects and remove as much as possible all ground of exception to any part of it, by leaving out the apocryphal lessons and correcting the translation of the psalms used in the public service where there is need of it, and in many other particulars.

"3. That instead of all former declarations and subscriptions to be made by ministers, it shall be sufficient for them that are admitted to the exercise

of their ministry in the Church of England to subscribe one general declaration and promise to this purpose, viz.: *That we do submit to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church of England as it shall be established by law, and promise to teach and practise accordingly.*

"4. That a new body of ecclesiastical Canons be made, particularly with a regard to a more effectual provision for the reformation of manners both in ministers and people.

"5. That there be an effectual regulation of ecclesiastical courts to remedy the great abuses and inconveniences which by degrees and length of time have crept into them; and particularly that the power of excommunication be taken out of the hands of lay officers and placed in the bishop, and not to be exercised for trivial matters, but upon great and weighty occasions.

"6. That for the future those who have been ordained in any of the foreign churches be not required to be re-ordained here, to render them capable of preferment in the Church.

"7. That for the future none be capable of any ecclesiastical benefice or preferment in the Church of England that shall be ordained in England otherwise than by bishops; and that those who have been ordained only by presbyters shall not be compelled to renounce their former ordination. But because many have and do still doubt of the validity of such ordination, where episcopal ordination may be had and is by law required, it shall be sufficient for such persons to receive ordination from a bishop in this or the like form: 'If thou art not already ordained, I ordain thee,' &c.; as in case a doubt be made of any one's baptism, it is appointed by the Liturgy that he be baptized in this form: 'If thou art not baptized, I baptize thee.'"

These are proposals "to be made by the Church of England for the union of *Protestants*." Who cannot see that the power of joint life already spoken of would be far greater and stronger if it comprehended Roman Catholics too; and who cannot see, also, that in the churches of the most strong and living Roman Catholic countries,—in France and Germany,—a movement is in progress which may one day make a general union of Christendom possible? But this will not be in our day, nor is it business which the England of this generation is set to do. What may be done in our day, what our generation has the call and the means, if only it has the resolution, to perform, is the union of Protestants. But this union will never be on the basis of the actual *Scriptural Protestantism* of our Puritans; and because, so long as they take this for the *Gospel* or good news of Christ, they cannot possibly unite on any other basis, the first step towards union is showing them that this is not the *Gospel*. If we have succeeded in doing even so much towards union as to convince one of them of this, we have not written in vain.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

The February Post-Bag.

LETTERS ABOUT THE CONSCRIPTION.

Circular from Monsieur de Boisferré, Prefect of the Haute Seine, to the Mayors of the Three hundred and ten Communes in his Department.

(PRIVATE.)

MONSIEUR LE MAIRE— *Seinebourg, 1st February.*

I WRITE to remind you that the annual drawing of lots for the conscription of the military and naval contingents will take place on the 14th of February and following days, at the chief towns of the cantons, and to request that you will post up an announcement to that effect on the notice-board of your Mairie. I need scarcely add, Monsieur le Maire, that this year, as on former occasions, the Government relies on you to spare no efforts in endeavouring to stimulate a healthy military enthusiasm in those of the young men of your commune whose turn it will be to draw. You will be regularly supplied with several copies of the *Moniteur de l'Armée*, as also with some interesting soldier-tales in the form of small tracts, which you will distribute amongst the villagers, not forgetting, when you do so, to expatiate on the numerous and brilliant advantages which a martial career holds out. The certainty of rapid promotion, the prospect of winning the Cross of Honour by valour on the field, the glory of belonging to the first army in the world, the possibility of rising from the rank of private soldier to the very highest dignities in the State: all these are points upon which you will, no doubt, see the importance of dilating at length. Should you notice any traces of a restless or insubordinate spirit in your commune, it will be easy for you to point out that the soldier who is comfortably housed, clothed, and fed, and who, in addition to the pay he receives whilst in the service, has a pension provided for him when he is old, stands in a position far preferable to that of the peasant, whose small gains are subject to the vicissitudes of crops and weather, and who, after a long and often very cheerless life of constant labour, hardly scrapes together a sustenance for his declining age. In cases where these arguments would fail in producing the desired effect, you might allude with profit to the dangers which the country would run unless properly defended by a valiant army, to the horrors of foreign invasion, to the ambitious schemes of neighbouring Powers, and to the necessity of keeping in check the revolutionary socialists of Paris and other large cities, who advocate communism, and would strip the peasant of his field in order to divide it amongst themselves. In short, Monsieur

le Maire, it will lie with your discretion to adopt all those methods of verbal stimulation and encouragement that may be suggested to you by your devotion to the Imperial Government, and by your patriotic zeal.

Receive, Sir, the assurance of my best sentiments.

HECTOR DE BOISFERRÉ.

Letter from M. de Boisferré, Prefect of the Haute Seine, to General de Camp-Chevron, commanding the Military Forces of the District.

MY DEAR GENERAL— *Seinebourg, February* 1.

I WISH you would kindly give your colonels the order to march out a good deal with their regiments into the country districts during the next two or three weeks. The more they march with their bands playing, colours flying, officers and vivandières in full uniform, the better it will be. I am looking forward rather nervously to the conscription. Ever since Government has suffered the Paris press to wag its tongue, anything like authority has become impossible. Not two days ago I got a note from the Home Minister, telling me he hoped the recruitment would give rise to no disturbances; and by the same post came a bundle of Radical papers from the capital, inciting the peasantry not to submit to the conscription and to refuse paying their taxes. The Opposition print of Seinebourg, too, is getting unmanageable. It makes puns upon my name, and dips into my private life. But what am I to do? I dare not prosecute. Four times already the Procureur-Impérial has asked me leave to drag the paper into court, and each time the Home Minister has refused to sanction the prosecution, on the ground that to do so would be to make him and me unpopular. Unpopular indeed! I would take my share of unpopularity readily enough if he would take his. Do you remember those halcyon days when we had Billault, St. Arnaud, and Persigny in the Ministry? There was not an Opposition paper in the Department; at the elections everything went as smooth as a truck on a tramway; and if we heard of a Radical anywhere in the neighbourhood we simply locked him up. Those were good times; and you may depend upon it, that with their new-fangled ideas and rose-water Ministers, the Empire will come to no good. However, to revert to my subject, the conscription is to take place in a few days, and I am to prevent disturbances without having recourse to what his Excellency terms "oppressive measures." This is pretty much as if they were to tell me to drive a nail into the wall without hitting it. I must trust to you to help me. Try and persuade your officers to make themselves as agreeable as possible. Let them smile at the women; throw their money about a little in village inns; and, when they get the chance, talk hopefully to the bumpkins about the facility of rising from the ranks. This always takes well. I need not remind you that our peasants are very much more stupid than any other peasants I have ever had the opportunity of observing: if I had the time to have a five minutes' interview with a few score of

them, turn by turn, I should persuade them, without much trouble, that private soldier becomes a field-marshal after two years' service. Unfortunately I have not the time, and that is why I have written this. Excuse such a long letter. Pray offer my kind regards to Madame la Générale, and believe me, my dear General,

Very faithfully yours,

H. DE BOISFERRÉ.

P.S.—It occurs to me that it would be no bad plan if Colonel de la Sabronache were to give a dozen of his smartest hussars a fortnight's leave of absence, and send them by twos or threes to go the round of the remoter villages with five or six napoleons apiece in their pockets. It might be well to choose Gascons: they talk the best and spend their money quickest. I will supply the napoleons; at least the Prefectoral fund will. After closing this letter I shall write to Monseigneur, to ask him to set his clergy at work. But I rather mistrust that Bishop; he is too fond of arguing. The clergy, like the Radicals, have had, of late, a great deal more tether than is good for them.—H. DE B.

Letter from M. de Boisferré to Monseigneur Galureau, Bishop of Seinebourg.

MONSEIGNEUR— *Seinebourg, February 1st.*

I HAVE just received the prospectus of a new "Boiled-Beef and Flannel-Waistcoat Club," to which, I observe, your lordship has extended your distinguished and benevolent patronage. May I hope, Monseigneur, that you will allow me to join you in furthering the charitable aims of this generous institution by adding my name to yours on the list of annual subscribers? It has been, in all times, the proudest prerogative of the State to assist the Church in her sacred mission of relieving the wants of suffering humanity; and it is, doubtless, to this community of action in the prosecution of righteous works that we must attribute the cordial harmony which has so long existed between the civil government and the clergy. The days are now happily, and for ever, past when the Church could think that it had any interests apart from those of the State. Such as is the blending of the spiritual life in the human body with the physical—the union of the soul with the heart—such also is the connection between the ecclesiastical power and the civil; a connection so close and sympathetic that, to attempt any severance of it, would be to risk the most vital dangers. For this reason, Monseigneur, it behoves the Church and the State, on all occasions when mutual help is required, to put their strength in common:—the State, by assisting and encouraging the Church in her administrations of charity; the Church, by supporting the State in all those measures of good government which are necessary to maintain order and to safeguard the well-being of society. More than once, already, it has been my happy privilege to thank your lordship for very kind and courteous co-operation in my departmental labours, and I

am sure I may safely appeal again to your patriotism to second me at the approaching conscription. The French army, Monseigneur, deserves the admiration of all loyal minds, for it is at once an emblem of peace, of religion, and of civilization—of peace, because it is only by the permanence of a strong armed force that France can set a curb upon the rapacious schemes of foreign potentates; of religion, because it is to the French army that is due the glory of having protected our Holy Father the Pope against the nefarious invasion of lawless infidels; and of civilization, because, were it not for our soldiers, the nation would soon become a prey to those godless republicans, who, in 1793, desecrated the churches, prescribed the Catholic faith and converted our country into a wilderness. I should esteem it a favour if your lordship would direct your clergy to point out these facts, in their sermons, between this and conscription time. In every village there are disaffected or timorous spirits who refuse to look upon military service as a debt which every good citizen owes to the State; and who, at the drawing of lots, are prone to break out into riots. The clergy may render great assistance to the Government if they will explain from their pulpits that the conscription is an institution founded on the principles of equality and justice; that it is approved by the Church, and that, existing as it does for the protection and happiness of the community, it is the duty of all honest men to submit to it with patience and cheerfulness. Thanking your lordship once more for your invariable readiness in seconding my labours,

I have the honour to remain, Monseigneur,

Your very faithful and obliged servant,

H. DE BOISFERRÉ.

Announcement posted up on the Notice-boards of the Three hundred and ten Mairies of the Department of the Haute Seine.

WE, THE MAYOR—

THIS is to give notice, that on the 14th February and following days, the annual drawing of lots for the recruitment of the military and naval contingents will take place at the chief towns of the cantons.

All the young men who completed their twentieth year during the course of the last twelve months will be required to attend. The drawing of lots will be superintended by the Prefect of the Department, by the General commanding the division, and by the Military Inspector of the district. Claims for exemption from military service will be examined by the Council of Revision, which will commence its sittings on the 1st of March.

Those who will be entitled to claim exemption before the Council of Revision, by virtue of the laws of 1793, 1819, and 1832, regulating the conscription, are:—1, only sons of widows; 2, eldest brothers of orphan families; 3, students preparing for the priesthood; 4, brothers of

soldiers actually serving in the army;* and, 5, those afflicted with physical infirmities of a nature to incapacitate them for service.

The drawing of lots will be performed in public. Any one neglecting to appear and answer to the call of his name, unless hindered by duly certified illness, or any other grave impediment, will be amenable to the penalties specified in the Criminal Code against military deserters.

By Order,

February 2. THE MAYOR.

Letter from M. Robert Marceau (age 20), *Student of Law, to his friend M. Gustave Dumoncel, Medical Student in Paris.*

Village of Champ-les-Noix,

MY DEAR DUMONCEL— *Department of Haute Seine, February* 4.

WHEN I left you in Paris last Thursday, to come back to my native village and take my chance in that flesh-and-blood lottery called the conscription, I promised to write and let you know how it fared with me on my journey, and how I was received by the inhabitants of this interesting though heaven-forsaken locality. My countrymen found me improved, which is more than I can say for them. There has long been a deep prejudice in these parts against the vain arts of reading and writing, and I learned, without astonishment, that our Mayor, who used to know his alphabet as far as the letter Q, had retrograded, since I last saw him, to the letter G. Progress walks backwards in these latitudes, to make up for its excess of pace in other regions. I am glad to say I found my father and mother in good health; but my father, who, as you know, is an old officer, still grieves me with his notions as to government, which clearly belong to a fossil era, and would expose him to the ignominy of being made a prefect, could they be known in high quarters. Yesterday he lectured me on the chapter of respect for constituted authorities, in which, he was sorry to notice, I seemed deficient. I fancy he must have heard me explaining to the Mayor that the Emperor rides to High Mass every Sunday on a bicycle, and that the Cabinet stalk after him in single file on stilts. My mother, who has lost all illusions as to the great of the earth, since she heard that the Minister of Fine Arts dyed his hair,—my mother lets me talk, and takes my part. I imagine she has a grudge against the Mayor. That representative of order, and his brother the churchwarden, each of them bought a new hat three years ago, and as the novelty of the thing has not yet had time to wear off, they have been bumptious on the strength of it ever since. When I arrived here the day before yesterday, I found all the available population

* The fact of there being one brother out of a family already in the army does not exempt *all* the other brothers, but only one of them. Thus, if there were six brothers in a family, and the eldest was enrolled by conscription, this would exempt the second. In the same way the enrolment of the third would exempt the fourth, and that of the fifth would exempt the sixth.

of Champ-les-Noix gathered in front of the Mairie, to read the proclamation about the drawing of lots, which is to come off on the 14th. There was a great gawk staring at the paper and bleating like a calf: "I am sorry for you," I said, "but you seem affected. Is there anything I can say to console you?" This proof of sympathy touched him. He whimpered that his name was Floupineau; that he was in love, and that if he was taken by the conscription next week, his sweetheart would have to wait seven years for him. I tried to reassure him on this head by explaining that women are not addicted to waiting seven years, and that the virgin of his choice would assuredly solace herself for his absence by taking some one else. But this failed to raise his spirits. He sobbed to me that the girl he loved was not a woman like other women, which made me think that she possibly had a few limbs missing, or that she was eight feet high and ate flaming tow for sustenance. But an hour or two later I saw the girl, and then I understood the grief of poor Floupineau, though I still wondered why he gave vent to it in public instead of retiring to a secluded place where there would be nobody to interfere with him. As you are aware, friend Dumoncel, I am not much given to sentiment, which I have always considered out of place in this age of steamboats,—but, frankly, I cannot help feeling for the unfortunate Floupineau. He is a great lout, but there must be some good in him, else that pretty, modest girl I saw clinging to his arm would never love him as she does. She tried to cheer him, and smiled at him through her tears. He bore up well enough whilst she was there, but as soon as she was gone, he sat down on a stone and cried as if his heart would break. Poor fellow! I believe his heart *was* breaking. I confess I didn't like it, and returned home to dinner, without much of an appetite. He had taken me to his cottage, and shown me the books in which Annette (her name is Annette) had taught him to read. There was a large slate, too, covered with pothooks, on which he had been learning to write, in order to please her. If he draws a lucky number on the 14th, they are to be married; but if not—why, Floupineau will be put into a pair of red trousers and marched off to serve the country for the next seven years, at the rate of one sou a day, which makes 18 francs 25 centimes per annum. Floupineau sees nothing in this prospect to cheer him, and I am not surprised to find that he wishes there were no Government. As my own political views are in close harmony with his on this point, I have promised to help him in the realization of them, should ever the occasion present itself: but meanwhile I think the best thing I can do for poor Floupineau is to get up a subscription, and endeavour to raise the 800 francs requisite to insure him.* Solomon Mosé, the man merchant, is at present

* In time of peace it generally costs from 2,300 to 2,500 to buy a substitute (*remplaçant*), but by insuring oneself beforehand—*i.e.* before the drawing of lots—it is possible to get off free by paying 800 francs. The insurance agents are mostly Jews and go by the generic name of *marchands d'hommes*. If conducted on a large scale their business is a very lucrative one.

at Seinebourg, and his terms are 800 francs up to the eve of conscription day. You see there is not much time to lose, for if the money is not raised by the 12th, and Floupineau draws a bad ticket on the 14th, it will cost 2,300 francs to buy him off, and I see no chance of ever raising such a sum unless by hydraulic pressure. Myself, you know, I am insured. My mother saved up the 800 francs, sou by sou, in a worsted stocking, out of the 3,000 francs a year which the generosity of the State allows to my father for having been twice knocked over with a rifle by Arabs and once by a Russian. It was a piece of good-nature on their part, for there is the old military blood in both my parents, and I suspect they would not have been sorry to see me take kindly to the chassepot and win myself a pair of epaulets. But *Dis aliter visum est.* Providence has given me no taste for mounting guard on winter nights with the thermometer at 15° below freezing-point, and it is probably this that inspires me with a fellow-feeling for Floupineau. Do your best, Dumoncel, to gather a few mites for my rustic couple. Ask Bernard, Ballandu, Camille, Taupe, and the others, to levy a tax upon their exchequers. You can open my room, too, and take out my foils, the dumb-bells, the plaster bust of Robespierre, the edition of Voltaire, and the Pierrot costume I wore last Carnival; all these are marketable commodities which should loosen the purse-strings of the Mont de Piété, to the tune of at least a few francs or so. . . Good-by. It is four o'clock, the hour when the great guns of Champ-les-Noix meet at the café opposite, and play dominoes with accompaniment of beer till five. After that we mostly dine each man in his home. (I say *we*, because I rank as a great gun.) At six we meet one another again at the café for more dominoes and beer till nine. By ten there is not a candle burning within five miles round. It is a fine vegetarian sort of life. I observe that all the men grow under it into a strong family likeness with cucumbers.

Good-by again. Yours affectionately,

ROBERT MARCEAU.

P.S.—By the way, I had almost forgotten it. Send me a few Paris papers, will you? They take in nothing here but the *Officiel!* I have been living for two days on Imperial decrees and articles in praise of the dynasty!

Letter from Madame la Générale de Camp-Chevron (aged twenty-eight) to her friend Madame la Baronne de Tréfeuillet, at Paris.

Château de Camp-Chevron,

DEAR LOUISE— *Près de Champ-les-Noix, Haute Seine, February 7.*

IT is so cruel of you to write and say you are unable to come, after I have been counting on you all along to help me in my duties of hospitality during this busy month. The conscription begins on the 14th, and every day the General brings home seven or eight officers to luncheon,

and as many to dinner. I never saw so much marching and countermarching in all my life. My cousin Henri de Marcelay, of the Chasseurs, and Colonel de la Sabronache, of the Hussars, both tell me they have scarcely been out of uniform for the last six days, and I am sure they both look tired enough, though it seems they have at least three weeks more of this marching to go through before they can hope for any rest. However, it is chiefly the poor musicians I pity, for it is on them that this month of February falls heaviest. Every day they have to play the same tunes over and over again in the different villages; and yesterday, when the band of the 103rd stopped at Champ-les-Noix, I declare the same piece was encored no less than four times. I believe it was that pretty song out of the "Fille du Régiment." The villagers were mad about it; they clapped their hands and waved their cotton caps, to the great delight of the General, who says that if Government always provided a band to lead the peasants to the lottery-boxes, there would never be any riots to fear. He appears to be very much afraid of riots this year, the General. Yesterday, when the band had done playing, I wanted to have a barrel of beer sent down to them from the castle; but he refused to allow me, because he said it was better for the soldiers to buy their refreshments at the village inn, as this would help to make them popular. I do not know whether there is any real danger of disturbances, but I am told everywhere that the peasantry are becoming much less obedient than they used to be, and all the officers—you know how funnily they talk—say that the Empire is going to the dogs. This morning there came a visitor to the castle, who put the General into a great passion. We were sitting in the breakfast-room, at about eleven o'clock, when we saw a young man open the garden-gate and walk up towards the house across the lawn. He was not dressed as a peasant, but rather like an artist, and was smoking a cigarette with an air of enjoyment and a jauntiness which belong only to Parisians. Upon catching sight of us he came at once to the window of the breakfast-room, which is on a level with the terrace, threw away his cigarette, stepped in, and said coolly, though politely and with his hat off: "I believe I have the pleasure of addressing Madame de Camp-Chevron? My name is Robert Marceau." And he handed me one of his cards. The General had seemed amused at first by the young man's unceremonious entry; but on hearing him give his name, he got up and asked excitedly: "Am I to understand, sir, that it is you who are M. Robert Marceau?" "Yes," answered the young man, not in the least disconcerted. "My name is Marceau, at your service." "Then, I regret to say, sir," rejoined my husband, getting very red,—"I regret to say that I have the worst possible reports about you." "You surprise me, General," answered M. Marceau, accepting, with a bow, the seat I offered him. "I have scarcely been here a week, and people must have gone to work very fast if they have already drawn up reports about me." He said all this so quietly and with such perfect good-humour, that I could not help feeling interested in him. The General, however, was raising

his voice and growing more angry each moment:—"I know, sir, you have only been here a week," he continued; "but you have done more mischief in that week than I shall be able to mend in a month. You play tricks with the Mayor of your village, you turn the authorities into ridicule, you import seditious books and papers from Paris, you post up absurd proclamations during the night on the door of the Mairie; in fact you play all the ape's pranks that you learn in that confounded Quartier Latin of yours. Look here, sir, what do you call this?"—and my husband drew from his pocket a ridiculous placard, headed, "We, the Mayor," and parodying the official announcement as to the conscription. I was obliged to bite my lips to keep from smiling, for it was really very amusing; but the General displayed the placard indignantly, and called upon the young man for an explanation: "I should like to know, sir," he said sternly, "whether you think this sort of thing can be tolerated? Your object is evidently to incite the country lads against the conscription. You gather ignorant dolts round you, and in that sneering, saucy way you Parisians have, you teach them to laugh at Government, patriotism, glory, and everything else, and to look upon their Mayor as an idiot. How do you expect authority is ever to be maintained if proceedings of this sort are allowed?" So far M. Marceau had listened in silence and with well-bred attention; when the General had done speaking, he asked demurely: "If Government objects to be laughed at, why does it appoint Mayors who can't read?" I do not think my husband was prepared for this question. It astonished and appeared to perplex him. Hoping to put an end to the debate, I interfered by remarking that M. Marceau must be tired with his walk, and inviting him to take a glass of wine or a cup of coffee. But he declined politely, and following up his first stroke with an easy self-possession that seemed to amaze the General, as it certainly did me, he began a witty, satirical attack upon the Government, the poor old Mayor of Champ-les-Noix, the Prefect, the conscription, the army, and a hundred other things and people, of which it is wonderful that a boy like him should know anything. I cannot remember all that my husband said in reply, but he answered hotly, and was thus at a disadvantage with M. Marceau, who never speaks one word louder than another, and appears incapable of losing his temper. The dispute turned chiefly on the conscription, which the General of course supported, although I could see that some of M. Marceau's arguments puzzled him. I felt sorry that my cousin, Henri de Marcelay, was not there, for he is of about the same age as the young student, and this would have made the match more even. After the controversy had lasted more than half an hour, it was brought abruptly to an end by the General declaring that, right or not right, the conscription was law, and that if anybody in the department attempted to withstand it he would do so at his peril. He added a warning to the young man to mind what he was about, and ended by asking him very dryly to what he was indebted for the honour of his visit. The arrival of M. Marceau had

been so unexpected, and the altercation following it so sudden, that I had entirely forgotten the student was a stranger. My husband's question reminded me that it was to me M. Marceau had first addressed himself on entering, and so, to make some amends for the General's gruffness, I inquired gently if there was anything we could do for him. He answered by producing a scrap of paper from his pocket-book, and holding it out to me: "I came on a begging mission, Madame," he continued calmly. "There is an unfortunate villager who is in love and wants to get married. I am trying to raise money enough to insure him against bad luck at the conscription." The General, who is really very harsh at times, treated this as an impertinence. He took the paper out of my hands and gave it back to M. Marceau, telling him that if he had nothing better to say, he would have done as well to keep at home. The student, however, instead of being abashed, looked up with a smile, and said pleadingly, "I believe, General, you are less hard than you would have it seem, and you are too just to visit your resentment towards me upon poor Floupineau. The man is not likely to make a good soldier, he is too much in love for that. I assure you it will be doing a kind action if you help to save him from the chance of being shot some morning as a deserter." The General, who was, perhaps, a little ashamed of his rudeness, took back the paper and glanced over it, grumbling: "Who has subscribed this twenty-franc piece?" he asked. "You don't seem to have been very fortunate in your subscriptions. This is the only one: whose is it?" M. Marceau coloured slightly, and said, "The twenty francs are mine." Then in a somewhat plaintive tone, he added: "Floupineau's fellow-villagers treat his love-affair rather as a joke. They would subscribe willingly enough to buy him a new waistcoat, especially if he didn't want one, but they refuse to give a single centime towards making him happy. Perhaps, though, if you, General, were to head the list I might be more fortunate, for charitable subscriptions are mostly a game of follow-my-leader." "Floupineau, Floupineau!" murmured my husband, as if trying to recollect something in connection with the name, and paying no attention to these last remarks. "Floupineau——Ah! I have it! Here, sir, take back your list. This Floupineau is a fellow with red hair, is he not?" M. Marceau gave a nod. "Very well, then, I know him. He is the man who was blubbering in the market-place when I passed through the village yesterday with the 103rd, and who shouted, 'A bas la troupe!' Egad! I shouldn't wonder if it was he who threw the mangel-wurzel at the drum-major. I will remember him, sir, you may depend upon it." "You mustn't be too severe, General," expostulated M. Marceau; "the unhappy fellow is in love, and a despairing lover may be excused for throwing mangel-wurzels." "The deuce he may, sir!" responded the General, in a huff. "And what's to become of military discipline? But we have talked enough on this matter. If your Floupineau draws a service-number on the 14th I will take care and order his Colonel to keep

a sharp look-out on him. And the same on you, by the way, for you are to draw too, I believe?" "Excuse me, General, I am insured," laughed M. Marceau, with a bow. "More's the pity, sir; more's the pity," rejoined my husband. "Seven years' musket-drill would have done you all the good in the world, if only to knock some of your infernal republican notions out of your head. I have the honour to wish you a good morning." And upon this the General turned on his heel, leaving M. Marceau, hat in hand, to make a final bow to me, and then beat a leisurely and perfectly dignified retreat by the same way he came.

I have dwelt at considerable length upon this episode, my dear Louise, in the first place because I was in a letter-writing mood, and in the next, because the adventure itself seemed to me a curious one. This is such a plodding world that a young man who walks unexpectedly into a breakfast-room to beg subscriptions for a love-sick peasant affords one something of a novelty to muse over. I have had inquiries made in the village since the morning, and find that M. Marceau is not such a very terrible democrat as the General seems to think. He has got himself into disgrace with the Mayor and Municipal Council by laughing at them, as it seems to be his practice to laugh at everybody; and he has irritated the sub-prefect, justices of the peace, and commissaries of police, by flooding this part of the country with Radical papers; but I scarcely think there is much to be feared from him in the way of riots; he has a reputation for being as good-hearted as he is merry, which is saying a good deal, for he is always smiling. As for the peasant Floupineau, I am told that his case is really a romantic one. The girl he loves is amiable, pretty, and modest. She is greatly superior to him in intelligence and culture, and his attachment for her is one of those fine things which, in the interests of poetry, one ought to encourage. He has learned to read and write so as to be more worthy of her, which is equivalent to what the slaying of two dragons would have been in the olden times. He has also given up the public-house, which may count as a third dragon, and he works from daybreak till beyond dark so as to be able to collect a small sum towards the famous 800 francs for insurance. In short, dear Louise, I have just sent 100 francs anonymously for him under cover to M. Marceau, and I pray with all my heart that between this and the 14th the General may be tempted to relent and do the same. My maid knocks to tell me it is time to dress for dinner; so I must close and seal. I cannot quite forgive you for not having kept your word about coming to spend a month here; but, after all, you would have found the house transformed into a very barrack,—spurs and swords are clinking and clattering through the passages all day; passing regiments encamp themselves on the lawn; the dining-hall has become a permanent mess-room; and your affectionate friend, occupied all her time in catering meat and drink for hungry officers, seems to have exchanged her rank of générale for that of vivandière.

Eugénie de Camp-Chevron.

Letter from M. Gustave Dumoncel, Medical Student in Paris, to his friend M. Robert Marceau, at Champ-les-Noix, Haute Seine.

From the top of an Omnibus,
Paris, February 7.

Deeply touched, O friend, by hearing that you had been reduced to feed your mind for two days upon the prose of the *Journal Officiel*, your comrades and well-wishers, *sodales et amici*, forwarded the day before yesterday, per parcels' delivery, a deal-box containing, 1 *item*, the complete collection, amounting to three numbers, of a republican organ which was predestined to a long and lucrative existence, had the Government suffered it to live—which it didn't; 2 *item*, the complete collection (seven numbers) of another republican organ, which would have rendered immense services to the commonwealth had its life not been cut untimely short by a paucity of funds, and by the absence of all patriotism and disinterestedness in the breast of the printer; 3 *item*, 115 odd copies of divers subversive publications for distribution amongst the agrarian classes; 4 *item*, a series of coloured plates descriptive of the horrors of war, for the encouragement of bucolic minds about to face the conscription; 5 *item*, a correct statistical return of the numbers killed and wounded during the principal campaigns of the present century; 6, four tin-tacks to nail up said statistical return in any convenient and conspicuous spot where it would be likely to attract attention. It is to be hoped, O Robert, that these treasures travelled safely to their haven. In addition, and for your own private edification, you will receive every day, per post, three newspapers carefully selected with a view to the apoplectic effect they might produce upon your Prefect were a stray number of them accidentally to fall into his hands.—The raising of funds for the interesting Floupineau has been a more delicate operation than the purveying of literature. A cabinet council was convoked at my official residence to consider and vote upon ways and means. His excellency the secretary of state, Ballandu, mulcted his privy purse in one moiety of its contents, to wit, fifteen francs; his excellency, Camille Taupe, decided upon mortgaging a part of his personal estate—*videlicet*, two pairs of boots, a silver watch, and six nightcaps—for the sum in specie of seventeen francs; your other colleagues in the cabinet also laid their budgets under a special tax; but all these financial operations have failed to raise the supply to more than sixty-three francs, enclosed herein per post-office order. The badness of the times, O Robert, must be accepted as an extenuation of the smallness of this amount. Had your colleagues in the cabinet been made aware six weeks ago, *i.e.* at the 1st January, of the pitiable predicament of the interesting Floupineau, they might have been able to do more. But in February, when the coffers of the state are invariably empty, all they can offer is the expression of their cordial sympathies, and the hope that Floupineau may have

learned and meditated upon the precept of Horace, *Æquam memento rebus in arduis servare mentem.*

Written by my hand, in pencil, on top of omnibus aforementioned.

GUSTAVE DUMONCEL,
Sec. of State for Dept. of Cutting and Wounding,
(*Vulgò, Medical Student.*)

Letter from Madame la Baronne de Tréfeuillet, in Paris, to her friend Madame la Générale de Camp-Chevron.

Avenue des Champs-Elysées, February 8.

THANKS, dear Eugénie, for your nice long letter, just received. How sorry I am not to be with you! Why, the house full of officers, and the clinking of spurs in the passages, and the camping on the lawn, and the dining-table surrounded with uniforms, are what I should like above all things in the world—*moi, qui adore les militaires!* However, *la femme propose et le médecin dispose:* for I have been suffering from a bad cold, and the doctor positively forbids my moving out of Paris. Enclosed is a hundred-franc note for *ce pauvre* Floupineau, whose story has quite touched me. I do declare, my dear, it is a shame for Government to take young men as it does and make soldiers of them against their will. I know, if they had taken my lover when I was a young girl and marched him away for seven years, I should have hated Government ever after. If they want soldiers they ought only to enlist those who are not in love; I shall tell M. le Ministre de la Guerre so when I next see him. You can send my one hundred francs anonymously, as you did yours, through that M. Marceau, whom I like without knowing him. I think he is quite right to laugh at the Mayor and everybody else: I am sure I should do so if I were him. I hope neither the General nor the Prefect will try and get him into trouble; it is so pleasant to laugh and to be gay, and twenty years old! Mind, dear, I shall expect some more letters from you to let me know what becomes of our loving couple. I trust everything will go well. You should get somebody to tell the girl that she ought to burn a wax-taper every day at the Virgin's altar. The peasant-girls do it in Brittany when their sweethearts are going to draw, and it can do no harm. If the wedding comes off you must let me hear of it some days beforehand, and I will send the bride a box of bonbons. Please remember me kindly to the General, and believe me, dear Eugénie, your ever affectionate friend,

LOUISE DE TRÉFEUILLET.

Letter from Monseigneur Galureau, Bishop of Seinebourg, to M. de Boisferré, Prefect of the Haute Seine.

MONSIEUR LE PRÉFET,— *February* 8.

IN accordance with the wishes expressed in your letter of the 1st, I have recommended my clergy to take the approaching conscription as a

text for seasonable exhortations on the virtues of patience and resignation; and I trust that the words spoken from the pulpit may produce on the congregations the effect you desire. At the same time, Monsieur le Préfet, it is with sorrow I hear, from numerous reports brought to me within the present week, that overt attempts have been made in several communes of your Department to undermine the influence of the clergy by the dissemination of seditious and infidel literature; and that no effort has been undertaken by the civil authorities to put a stop to this deplorable and insidious work of mischief. The commune in which the evil appears to have taken rise, is that of Champ-les-Noix, the vicar of which writes to complain that the soul of every one of the villagers is being tainted by newspapers and pamphlets of the most reprehensible character. I am aware, Monsieur le Préfet, that, for political ends of its own, the Government has thought good to allow a great measure of latitude to the press of large cities; but I trust you will concur with me in seeing that a liberty which may be harmless in crowded centres, amongst populations already corrupt, cannot be extended without danger to districts where—heaven be praised—religion and piety still flourish luxuriantly under the careful culture of the priesthood. If, as you so justly remark in your letter, sir, the Church and the State are cordially knit in bonds of mutual interest and affection, it is surely as much the duty of the State to protect the clergy against the venomous attacks of godless journalism, as it is the duty of the Church, at certain times, to preach obedience and subjection to the civil government. Far be it from me to invoke the severity of the law upon anybody, but at a moment when, in deference to your request, the clergy of this diocese are inculcating precepts of loyalty and patriotism, I cannot but think, Monsieur le Préfet, it would be a generous acknowledgment if the civil government were to give some proofs of its respect for the Catholic faith and its ministers.

I beg to thank you for your bounty on behalf of my Clothing Club, and have the honour to remain, Monsieur le Préfet, your humble and obedient servant,

I. Clement, *Bishop of Seinebourg.*

Letter from M. de Boisferré, Prefect of the Haute Seine, to M. le Vicomte de Chasse-Croisé, Sub-Prefect of the same Department for the Arrondissement of Champ-les-Néfles.

Dear Chasse-Croisé— *Seinebourg, February* 8.

What does all this mean? I have two letters before me, one from the Bishop and another from the General, complaining of disaffected spirit, seditious papers, and symptoms of disturbance in a large district of the Department. How is it I have not received official intimation of this? They say it is in your arrondissement at Champ-les-Noix that the mischief is hatching. What can your mayors be thinking about? why don't they send reports? Who is the Mayor of Champ-les-Noix?

Rate him soundly and ask him why he doesn't attend better to his business? Write by return, for I am altogether in the dark, and the Bishop is as bitter as a weed; one would think somebody had been flaying him.

Yours faithfully,

H. DE B.

Despatch from M. le Vicomte de Chasse-Croisé, Sub-Prefect, to M. de Boisferré, Prefect.

Sous-Préfecture de Champ-les-Nèfles,

DEAR MONSIEUR LE PRÉFET— *February* 9, 8 A.M.

I WAS just on the point of writing to you when your note of yesterday came in. I only received intelligence last night of the doings of Champ-les-Noix. None of the mayors had written, and it was too late for yesterday's post when I was put in possession of the three voluminous reports which I enclose. After reading these reports, I cannot but think that a great deal of fuss is being made about nothing. The whole affair amounts to a few pranks played by a Quartier Latin student, named Marceau, who is going to draw at the conscription next week. He seems to be a wild, good-natured sort of fellow, addicted to socialist trash and halfpenny papers. He has brought a boxful of these with him from Paris, and distributes them by handfuls. I do not think, however, there is much fear of anybody surfeiting himself with this kind of literature. To begin with, not one out of twenty of our people can read, and if they could it would make no difference, for they would not be able to understand the papers,—I know I cannot, though I tried conscientiously for an hour last night. There is a more serious charge against Robert Marceau, of posting up prints to frighten the peasants, and excite them against the conscription. It appears he has taken a lout of the name of Floupineau under his protection, and is raising a subscription to insure him. Floupineau goes whimpering about the country at the heels of Marceau, and the two together preach that the conscription is an iniquity, a tax of blood, &c. &c. This might be dangerous if it had any effect, but I do not believe it has. It is true somebody accuses Floupineau of having assaulted the drum-major of the 103rd by throwing a vegetable at him, but the thing is not proved; and besides, as the conscription is now so near, it would, I am convinced, be sound policy to take no notice of M. Marceau's vagaries. However, I await your orders, and if you think it advisable, I will send for the young man and remonstrate quietly with him. If he is a gentleman this will act more efficaciously than a public reprimand or a prosecution.

I remain, dear Monsieur le Préfet,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

RAOUL DE CHASSE-CROISÉ.

Telegram from M. le Vicomte de Chasse-Croisé to M. de Boisferré.

February 9, 1 P.M.

After posting letter this morning, report arrived — practical joke at Champ-les-Noix, on Colonel Hussars. Squib tied tail of horse. Horse bolted. Colonel in ditch. Scuffle—soldiers peasantry. Nothing broken. Details by messenger.

Despatch from M. le Vicomte de Chasse-Croisé, Sub-Prefect, to M. de Boisferré, Prefect.

(BY SPECIAL MESSENGER.)

Sous-Préfecture de Champ-les-Nèfles,
February 9, 2.30 P.M.

Dear Monsieur le Préfet—

You will have got my telegram ere this, acquainting you summarily with what has taken place at Champ-les-Noix. I am unable to ascertain who is to blame for this new freak, but the consequences have, fortunately, not been serious, so that the delinquent, whoever he is, will only have a piece of childish folly on his conscience. I think it is essential not to exaggerate matters. The first report was, that a cracker had been tied to the tail of Colonel de la Sabronache's horse, that the horse had bolted, that the Colonel had been pitched on his head, and that there had been an armed encounter between the Hussars and the peasantry, resulting in some broken heads. After sifting all this, I find that not much remains; I am not even sure about the cracker. The most credible account is, that the Hussars had halted at Champ-les-Noix to play a fanfare, that a cracker, or a squib, or a box of vesuvians was mischievously thrown into the crowd by somebody, that the Colonel's horse took fright and threw his rider, and that the Hussars, to keep the people from hustling round the scene of the accident, drove them back with the pommels of their swords; whence a slight scuffle, in which, however, nobody was hurt. As might be expected, the Colonel is very much out of temper, though he escaped without a bruise. He talks of the affair as of an insult offered to the flag, and insists upon the necessity of making an example of the offenders. I saw him an hour ago, and pretended to agree in all he said, which is the only way with excited men. But, by-and-by, when he has grown cool, he will probably understand that for his own dignity's sake we had better treat the thing as an accident, and not plunge into a prosecution which would compel us to own that there is disaffection existing amongst the peasantry. This is always undesirable, and especially so, I think, in this case, for a deliberate insult offered to a Colonel at the head of his regiment would suppose very grave disaffection indeed. I trust my views on this subject may meet with your approval, and I hope you will sanction the course I should be inclined to adopt of ascribing this untoward piece of business simply and purely to a mishap. I ought to

add that there is nothing I have heard as yet which would tend to implicate M. Marceau in this affair. The prank, indeed, is not of the kind which any respectable student would play.

I remain, dear Monsieur le Préfet,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

Raoul de Chasse-Croisé.

Letter from M. de Boisferré, Prefect, to M. Victor Merle, Editor of L'Aigle de Seinebourg (*Prefectoral organ*).

(private and confidential.)

My dear M. Merle— *February* 9.

You have probably heard what has just taken place at Champ-les-Noix; but, if not, the accompanying despatch just received from M. de Chasse-Croisé will inform you. It is an unlucky piece of business, and might read badly if stated to the public in a crude form: you had better dress it up, therefore, so as to give it a proper look. You can say that Colonel Sabronache's horse was frightened by the enthusiastic ovation which the peasants gave to the military. Describe the ringing cheers, waving of hats, &c. It would never do to let it be believed that a colonel was thrown into the mud on purpose. By the way, who is that contributor of yours who writes the articles on the army and conscription, and signs "Marengo?" He writes very well, but there is too much Paris and rose-water in his style. He smirks to his adversaries as if he were on the *Journal des Débats*. That doesn't do. What we want for country-folk is a pounding style, three adjectives to a noun, and plenty of seasoning: your own manner is capital. Tell "Marengo" that if he yields a point to his opponents the peasants will think he is funking. He must hit hard and yield nothing. Ask him to change his metaphors, too,—I observe he talks of the "tide of revolution." This is not happy when addressing an inland population who have never had a sight of the sea, and would not believe in its existence if sworn to them on oath. If he wants similes, let him compare a revolution to the sheep-rot or to the small-pox,—this frightens the women,—or to rick-burning, which always alarms the farmers. Moreover, let him stick to this point, and repeat it in every one of his articles, that the Conscription was first instituted under the Republic (1792), and that the Radicals who attack it are consequently humbugs.

Yours faithfully,

Hector de Boisferré.

View taken of the Episode at Champles-Noix by L'Aigle de Seinebourg, *organ of the Prefect.* (*Extract from the paper, February* 10.)

Considerable excitement was caused in the town yesterday by the report that M. de la Sabronache, the deservedly popular Colonel of the 27th Hussars, had met with a serious fall from his horse whilst out with his regiment in the neighbourhood of Champ-les-Noix. As generally happens in such cases, many exaggerated rumours were set afloat; and our Radical friends, in their eagerness to make political capital out of every event of an unusual character, lost no time in forging a cock-and-bull story about a squib or a cracker that had been maliciously thrown at the Colonel's horse by some peasant anxious for mischief. We are happy to be able to give the most categorical denial to this fable, the perverse ingenuity of which sufficiently denotes its origin. Nothing serious has happened: Colonel de la Sabronache is unhurt; and, although the small accident which has befallen him is in itself regrettable, yet the causes which immediately led to it are so extremely satisfactory that we can scarcely term the occurrence a mishap. Early yesterday the Colonel took the brilliant regiment, which he so ably commands, for a ride into the arrondissement of Champ-les-Nèfles, seven miles distant from Seinebourg. The morning was a lovely one, and the country roads were lined with villagers, who loudly cheered the brave troops, thus testifying in simple hearty fashion their respect and admiration for the army. At Champ-les-Noix there was a halt, and the Colonel, in order to please the peasants, ordered the trumpeters to sound a hunting fanfare. A great crowd was by this time gathered round the soldiers, and the fanfare was so splendidly executed that a veritable ovation was the result. The villagers burst into frantic huzzas. Many of them, no doubt, remembered that in a few days' time they too might be called to the honour of serving in the noble regiment before them, and this added fire to their enthusiasm. Hats were thrown up, handkerchiefs waved, flowers showered down; and it was one

View taken of the Episode at Champles-Noix by La Réforme de Seinebourg, *organ of the Opposition.* (*Extract from the paper, February* 10.)

At last the long pent-up indignation begotten by the annual levy of a heartless blood-tax, has found vent in one of our villages. Our readers will notice in another column the report of an occurrence too pregnant with political significance to be overlooked. A defiance has been publicly hurled by the peasantry of this Department at the prætorians of the Empire in the person of one of their most notorious chiefs, the Colonel of the 27th Hussars. It would be idle to seek to extenuate the purport of this act. It speaks for itself. It means despair, it means resistance, it means revolt against a state of things too insufferable to be longer borne. These are the facts:—Yesterday morning Colonel de la Sabronache, at the head of that regiment which has acquired so unenviable a celebrity in our town for its licentiousness and its arrogance, rode out on a parade excursion into the arrondissement of Champ-les-Nèfles. Our readers will bear in mind that conscription day is approaching, and that our rulers consider it good policy to despatch armed cohorts into the villages to overawe and dazzle the populations. However, a less shrewd man than the Colonel of the 27th would have had no difficulty in perceiving yesterday how vain are such idle displays to impose either fear or admiration. Everywhere the roads were lined with peasants whose sullen, dejected attitude sufficiently attested the little enthusiasm they felt for that puppet-show of coxcombish soldiers, whose gilt lace is paid for out of the sweat of the Labourer's brow, and whose sabres are forged by the aching of the Working-Man's limbs. At Champ-les-Noix there was a halt. Everybody knows what those military halts are, when thirsty, roystering troopers spread into the public-houses and set the example of drunkenness and revelry. We may suppose that, on this occasion, the scenes of intoxication and noise were even worse than usual; for soon loud murmurs began to be heard in the village, and the inhabitants clustered

of these hastily improvised nosegays, flung out of a cottage window by the hand of a village girl, which fell on the head of the Colonel's horse, and caused the spirited beast to take fright and plunge through the hedge of a garden, where it broke down and brought its rider to the ground. Fortunately, however, there was no hurt. In a minute the Colonel was up and laughing gaily at his accident. "I've been worse than that, gentlemen," he exclaimed, in good-natured allusion to his wounds on the field of battle ; and, before leaving the village, the gallant officer took care to kiss his hand, in true knightly fashion, at the young lady who had been the unwilling cause of the casualty, and whose tears, upon seeing how nearly she had been occasioning a catastrophe, were more eloquent than the fullest excuses. Thus all's well that ends well, and the incident to which our Radical friends, with their usual good faith, have sought to ascribe a revolutionary significance, stands reduced to its true proportions. The whole event proves simply this: That the approach of the conscription, far from altering the loyalty and patriotism of our peasant-classes, tends, on the contrary, to heighten those sentiments of attachment to the army and devotion to the Government which characterize all reasonable Frenchmen.

round the Colonel, uttering indignant protests against the desecration of their peaceful homes. Most people at Seinebourg are acquainted with the summary manners of Colonel de la Sabronache. Instead of listening to the complaints of the villagers he ordered his clarions to play a fanfare to drown their clamours, and immediately the voices that had been raised in just resentment were smothered in the sardonic braying of trumpets. But this was too much. The villagers had borne without murmuring the insolent contrast between the pompous splendour of the troops and their own sordid misery; they had submitted with only a groan to see their fields and hamlets invaded by those armed bravos, whose coming reminded many of them of the seven-years' tax they would soon be required to pay ; and they had confined themselves to simply expostulating when the profligate carousing of their unwelcome visitors filled them with disgust and anger. But there are limits to everything, and this last defiant reviling of their wretchedness swept away all patience. A young peasant burst through the crowd with a firework in his hand. "Insult for insult ! mockery for mockery!" he shouted desperately, and in face of the troops, stupefied with astonishment, he tied the plaything, ready lighted, to the tail of the Colonel's horse, which bounded at the explosion that followed and threw its rider, soiled and bleeding, on the road. Then followed one of those scenes with which the annals of the Second Empire have made us only too familiar. The soldiers, heated with wine and furious, drove back the people with the pommels of their swords, trampled them under foot and poured out volleys of coarse abuse, amidst the shrieks of women and the excited imprecations of men. It was pitiful work ; we forbear from description. Enough to say that when the Colonel had been picked up, and order restored by the intelligent and truly Imperial method just mentioned, the 27th Hussars, with their crest-fallen chief, took their way back for Seinebourg, completely edified, we trust, as to the popularity of the army amongst the villages. . . . Our readers will not require us to point the moral of this event, for the moral is obvious. Long years of military oppression are producing the fruit that was to be expected. There has been enough and more than enough of conscriptions, huge standing armies and crushing taxes. The peasant has grown tired of seeing his fields lie fallow for want of hands to till them, his sons enrolled by force and dragged off to waste the fairest years of their lives in the demoralizing sojourn of garrison towns, his purse emptied to pay for the keep of half a million strong men in idleness. The firework exploded at Champ-les-Noix is the signal-rocket of agrarian resistance ! We advise the Government to look to it.

Despatch from M. de Boisferré, Prefect, to M. le Vicomte de Chasse-Croisé Sub-Prefect at Champ-les-Nèfles.

Dear Chasse-Croisé — *Seinebourg, Feb.* 10.

You are quite right about attributing the Champ-les-Noix business to an accident. To acknowledge the existence of disaffection, save in cases where proof enough exists to send a few men to the hulks, is for a Prefect like committing suicide. You are quite wrong, though, in making light of the pranks lately played at the village, and in speaking indulgently of the student Marceau. You must have that young man arrested at once. Very possibly it was not he who threw the squib, but it was certainly his late eccentric doings which put it into the head of some peasant to throw it. Those fellows—I mean the peasants—have no imagination of their own; but they are like baboons—they imitate. Your views as to government, my dear Viscount, are too limp: they want more starch. Trust the experience of an old stager, who has had fifteen years of it at Seinebourg, nothing was ever done by handling countrymen with kid gloves. There are still four days to the conscription: this young Marceau has plenty of time to do more mischief. Have him quietly arrested in the night and brought to Seinebourg in a fly. We will keep him under lock and key till the fourteenth, and then liberate him, saying it was a mistake. Mind, however, it is done *quietly;* no noise or fuss. An arrest loses half its terrors if not managed in the dark.

Yours faithfully,

H. de B.

P.S.—I had forgotten the peasant Floupineau. Have him arrested too. He will be all the better for a little confinement. H. de B.

Letter from M. de Boisferré, Prefect, to M. le Général de Camp-Chevron.

My dear General— *Seinebourg, Feb.* 10.

To save further unpleasantness during the next few days, I have sent orders to Chasse-Croisé to have the young student Marceau arrested. It cannot do any harm: a day or two in gaol will frighten him and make him anxious to get back to Paris. I have also directed the incarceration of the peasant Floupineau, who has been going about with Marceau, snivelling his sorrows and begging subscriptions to buy himself an insurance. I suspect he has done more harm than the other. I know those peasants; they are as crafty as foxes. You will have noticed that *L'Aigle* of to-day gives the desirable version of the Sabronache affair; the other paper, *La Réforme*, takes the inexpedient view. I am going to send a denial by *Communiqué* to the latter, and I shall apply for leave to prosecute them on a charge of inciting the citizens to rebel against the law. This has an ugly sound, and may frighten the Minister into consenting. It will be a pleasure for me to see *La Réforme* in the dock again; it will be like old times. I think it advisable to continue the

marching and music with more zeal than ever for another week or so—especially in the vicinity of Champ-les-Noix. It is a pity one cannot have a band of music set up permanently in that village; I have not such a troublesome place in my whole province. Pray give my kind regards to Madame le Générale; and believe me, my dear General,

Yours very faithfully,

H. de Boisferré.

Letter from M. Robert Marceau, Student of Law, to his friend M. Gustave Dumoncel, Medical Student, in Paris.

My dear Dumoncel— *Feb.* 10.

You will have got my telegram thanking you for letter of 7th inst., and sixty-three francs enclosed. I should have added the acknowledgments of the interesting Floupineau, but they were so numerous and polysyllabic, that they must have necessitated a double message—a thing unadvisable on grounds of economy. Little purse is becoming big purse. I received 100 francs wrapped up in mauve paper, with feminine superscription, *Ad majorem Dei Cupidinis gloriam*, which must have been cribbed out of a dictionary, as the spelling was correct: which it would not have been had the lady trusted to her resources in orthography. Two days after, second edition of the hundred francs wrapped in paper—pink this time—with Latin superscription, *Macte, Puer!*—which might have applied indifferently to Floupineau or me, but which I equitably applied to both to save contestations. Floupineau had himself treasured up 115 francs, and Mdlle. Annette, 255, which raised the total, including donation of self, to 653 francs. But for the last two or three days I have been on my legs from rosy morn to dewy eve, and by sedulous importunacy of everybody within a radius of three leagues possessed of the wherewithal, I have scraped together an additional 110 francs, which reduces the *quod est inveniendum* to 47 francs. This I shall find in the course of the present day, either by adjudication of a section of my wardrobe to the itinerant vendor of old clothing, or by a solicitous appeal to the maternal wallet. This last chance, however, I regret to say in passing, holds out but hypothetical chances of success; for a first appeal to the wallet in question induced the reply that, if Madame Marceau had money to spare, she would expend it upon me and not upon Floupineau—a sentiment which I commended for its philoprogenitiveness, whilst deprecating it on the broad principles of universal philanthropy. We kept the matter of the subscriptions secret from Mdlle. Annette until last night, when the interesting Floupineau went, arrayed in Sabbath vestments, to communicate the secret to the object of his affections. Not having been present at the interview, I scruple to give a description of the same; but this morning, at break of day, I had to submit to the shampooing process of grateful thanks. Mdlle. Annette, dressed in her smartest, came with her lover, bearing a giant bouquet of mixed violets, which they laid on my breakfast-plate, and then said they should "never,

never" forget me. Mdlle. Annette looked very pretty, and cried; the interesting Floupineau, as became him on such an occasion, offered the appearance of a boiled lobster. There was more hand-shaking and vows of gratitude than seemed to me to meet the just demands of the case, for in point of fact it is not me, but the fair person who sent the two editions of the 100f. note, who should be thanked. I told Mdlle. Annette as much, and when she was gone, in company with her swain, both colouring and happy, I sat down to write a short note to the lady whom I suspect of the benefaction, a fair-haired, blue-eyed little gentlewoman, married to none other than the gallant and distinguished fire-eater who commands the military of this district. I sent the bouquet of violets too (both anonymously), so that should I be wrong in my guess—though I decline to think so, being of a perspicuous turn of mind—no harm will have been done. The day after to-morrow morning, Floupineau and I set out for Seinebourg, to seek Solomon Mosé, the white-slave trader, who deals in full-grown citizens and insurance policies. After the termination of the business with him, I shall have leisure on my hands, and be able to devote the next three days to the dissemination of sound views on the conscription amongst the peasantry. This leads me to the subject of the subversive literature you thoughtfully forwarded. It has done wonders. I have been cursed for the propagation of it by every functionary on the official ladder, from the highest to the lowest, beginning with the Prefect and ending with the Mayor. The peasants don't understand the papers, but this doesn't matter; they paste them on their walls, and make the General foam at the mouth, the curé tear his hair, the justice of the peace lose his appetite, and the garde champêtre blaspheme so horribly, that if it continues I shall be compelled to apply for a warrant against him on grounds of public morality. They learn very quickly, those peasants. I have taught them some songs of '48, which they intone with rare good effect under the Mayor's windows towards midnight, I leading the orchestra with an umbrella. I suspect if the conscription were postponed a fortnight, and I were obliged to stay here that time, the Mayor and his brother, the churchwarden, would be stricken down with jaundice. They are both yellowing perceptibly; but what is one to do, friend Dumoncel? one must devise something to make the time go by in this wilderness of a village. If there were shooting one might have recourse to that; but as the five rabbits and the two partridges who form the yearly contingent of game in this Department are invariably summoned to a happier world on the 1st September, five minutes and seven seconds exactly after the opening of the shooting season, authority-baiting is positively the only pastime left to keep one's watch from coming to a dead-stop, and one's life from withering untimely in the bud. However, I confess I am getting as bad a name in these parts as Maro's friend the *triste lupus*. All the peasants who owe a grudge to anybody take advantage of my presence to pay it off secretly in the dark, and next morning the responsibility of the misdeed, whatever it may be, is laid by unanimous consent on me. It is

thus I have been already credited with the buffeting of an inoffensive husband on his own doorstep after nightfall, with the felonious slaying of Madame la Juge de Paix's cat, and with the tying of a cracker to the tail of an eagle-nosed Colonel's horse yesterday morning in this very village. This last affair was no joke, though the villagers appeared to think it was. The Colonel might have been killed; as it was, his busby was squashed as flat as a biffin, and his sword twisted into a corkscrew by the unmistakeably ugly cropper he got. The peasants have been laughing at it ever since; I think their only regret in the matter is that the Colonel's head was not flattened too. There is nothing like rural life for stocking the heart with kindly feelings, and imparting to the mind a droll perception of humour. Thanks again to you and the "cabinet council" for your offering to Floupineau. I hope to be back amongst you soon.

Yours affectionately,

ROBERT MARCEAU.

Anonymous Letter, in Feminine Hand, deposited at M. Robert Marceau's door, 11th February, towards evening.

M. ROBERT MARCEAU is privately warned by a well-wisher that orders have been issued to have him arrested this very night, as well as the peasant Floupineau. M. Marceau had better leave Champ-les-Noix *instantly*, and keep hidden for the next few days. The writer requests M. Robert Marceau will burn this.

Telegram from M. le Vicomte de Chasse-Croisé, Sub-Prefect, to M. de Boisferré, Prefect.

February 11, 10.15 P.M.

Two birds flown. Neither Student Marceau nor Floupineau found. Detectives on going at 9.30 discovered both decamped hour before. Must have got warning.

Second Telegram from M. le Vicomte de Chasse-Croisé, Sub-Prefect, to M. de Boisferré, Prefect.

Midnight, Feb. 11.

ALL safe. Two birds caught. Have despatched them to Seinebourg.

Order from M. de Boisferré, Prefect, to M. Vrille, Governor of the Prison of Seinebourg.

MONSIEUR— *Feb.* 12.

You will detain the two prisoners, M. Robert Marceau and René Floupineau, till the morning of the 14th, and then set them free. You will see they are indulgently treated—I speak especially of M. Marceau—but you will allow them to communicate with nobody. All the letters they write must be forwarded to me.

HECTOR DE BOISFERRÉ.

Letter from M. Robert Marceau to his friend Gustave Dumoncel, at Paris. (*One of half-a-dozen letters written by M. Robert Marceau on the morning of his incarceration, and transmitted by M. Vrille to the Prefect, but never forwarded to their destination.*)

My dear Dumoncel— *Prison of Seinebourg, February* 13.

I am in prison! cell No. 3, first-floor passage, one of those that used to be reserved for the journalists of the locality during the palmy days of the Second Empire. The editor of *La Réforme de Seineboury* used to come here so often that he ended at last by leaving a portmanteau full of linen, so as not to have the trouble of bringing luggage each time he came. I slept in one of his nightcaps yesterday, and shall call upon him to thank him when I go out. My arrest, and that of the interesting Floupineau, who is my fellow-bondsman, though in another wing (cell 115, third floor back; ventilation deficient), was as unpleasantly sudden as the falling of a tile. I received private warning yesterday that I was in demand, and set out accordingly on a country walk in the neighbourhood, in the society of Floupineau, whom I roused from his couch. But where were we to go? Neither he nor I knew—there is no railway, nor stage-coach at Champ-les-Noix: we had to trust to our legs. We made across the fields hoping to reach Seinebourg on foot, and there lie hidden in an hotel. But we lost our way, wandered about helplessly across an expanse of ploughed fields, and, at a turning of a road, unexpectedly ran upon four gendarmes and a corporal, who happened to be on the look-out for us. An hour and twenty minutes afterwards we were lodged here. The people are very civil. This morning I had boiled beef for breakfast, and hopes are held out of a repetition of that delicacy at dinner. The governor told me, however, I could have anything else I liked by paying for it, which I thought considerate, especially as I had no money. Floupineau's manly virtues have come out well under the test of adversity. At first, under the impression that his head was going to be instantly shaved, he waxed despondent and talked gloomily; but upon learning that nothing was going to happen to him, beyond being locked up in an apartment eight feet by six, he turned sanguine again, and has been inveighing ever since against the Imperial Government. The melancholy part of the business, however, is, that we were to have insured Floupineau to-day, and that our confinement obliges me to trust to the governor of this establishment for the discharge of this formality. I have given him the 800 francs—every farthing of the money Floupineau and I possessed—and he has promised faithfully that he will see about it, which is the only assurance I can ever wring out of this deuce of a functionary. He has an immeasurable nose, and squints, but his manners are bland; I suspect the journalists, his guests, have formed him. I know he and the editor, whose nightcap I wore, were great chums. They used to sit together half the day, and the editor, to utilize the leisures of his friend, taught him to do paste and

scissors business, so that every time Jules Fauve came here *La Réforme* used to be sub-edited by the governor. M. Vrille found this a satisfactory way of adding two *napoleons* a week to his revenue, and I am told that the discontinuance of press prosecutions is weighing heavily on his mind. My object in writing to you, friend Dumoncel, is to ask you to busy yourself about me if you do not receive a telegram on the 14th or 15th announcing my liberation. Perhaps they will set Floupineau and me free to-morrow for the conscription, and if so the two days of boiled beef will not have much mattered. But if we are kept under lock longer it may mean that we are going to be prosecuted for something, and this may be serious. You have influential connections: your cousin has a brother in-law who knows the nephew of the Home Minister's private secretary. This is a little intricate, but in misfortune, as in love and war, all ways are good that lead to the desired end. I do not so much care for myself, but I am nervous about Floupineau and Mdlle. Annette. If the governor does not manage the insurance to-day it will be too late, and if Floupineau draws a bad number to-morrow I shall feel the weight of a paving-stone on my conscience; for it is certainly owing to me that Floupineau is yawning at this moment in cell No. 115, and should he be put into red breeches and presented with a chassepot, together with instructions to learn the use of it for the next few years, it will unquestionably be owing to my fault. Good-by. If you ever think of settling in the country I recommend you to keep clear of this Department. The Prefect has notions concerning the liberty of the subject which appear to me radically unsound.

Yours affectionately,

Robert Marceau.

P.S.—Should our imprisonment assume a chronic complexion, I authorise the nephew of your cousin's brother-in-law to make terms with the Minister's private secretary. In exchange for the liberation, with all honours, of Floupineau and self, I would promise a platonic allegiance to the Imperial dynasty. I must decline, however, to accept a seat in the Cabinet.

R. M.

Letter from M. Vrille, Governor of the Prison of Seinebourg, to M. de Boisferré, Prefect.

Monsieur le Préfet— *February* 13.

I forward herewith six letters, written this morning by M. Robert Marceau, and one by the prisoner Floupineau. M. Marceau has intrusted me with 800 francs, directing me to insure his fellow-prisoner against the risks of the conscription of to-morrow. I await your orders on this subject, and have the honour to remain, M. le Préfet,

Your most humble, obedient servant,

Zacharie Vrille.

Reply from M. de Boisferré to M. Vrille.

Monsieur—

I do not see any necessity for insuring the prisoner Floupineau. I think the best thing that could befall him would be to be trained to habits of loyalty and good behaviour, by subjection to military discipline. You had better reply to M. Marceau, that you have no authority to dispose of funds confided to you by prisoners.

I remain, &c.

Hector de Boisferré.

Telegram from M. Robert Marceau to M. Gustave Dumoncel, Medical Student in Paris.

February 14, 8 a.m.

Just free with Floupineau. But governor never insured. Floupineau distracted. Conscription in an hour. Offer of platonic allegiance withdrawn.

Extract from L'Aigle de Seinebourg, *Prefectoral Organ.*

February 15.

Yesterday the drawing of lots for the conscription of the present year's military contingent was begun in this Department. The drawing commenced in the canton of Champ-les-Nèfles, and we are happy to state that everything passed off in the utmost good order. The gaiety and loyal enthusiasm of the peasants were as conspicuous as on former occasions. There was the usual crowding of the churches and offertories of tapers previous to the drawing, and we need scarcely add that the cafés were as full as ever with conscripts, who toasted the success of each other's military careers in foaming jugs of beer. In the evening there was a performance at the small theatre of Champ-les-Nèfles by the dramatic and operatic troupe of the Imperial Theatre of Seinebourg, the pieces given being *Le Caporal et la Payse*, the second act of *Les Dragons de Villars*, and *La Fille du Régiment*. The famous cavatina in the last piece—we mean the song of the "Brave Twenty-First"—was rapturously encored, and Mdlle. Lili Fontange, who played the part of the vivandière, was called again and again before the curtain at the close of the act by the enthusiastic and delighted conscripts. The only episode reported to us in connection with the drawing of lots is the obstreperous grief of a peasant named Floupineau, who, on drawing a ticket which subjected him to enrolment, burst out into the most violent and unseemly demonstrations of sorrow, and had eventually to be removed by the aid of the gendarmerie. On the whole, however, we never remember a conscription day so completely devoid of all rioting and extravagance. It is evident that the army, thanks to the constant solicitude of the Emperor for its welfare, is becoming each year more popular amongst our villagers.

Letter from Madame la Générale de Camp-Chevron to her friend Madame la Baronne de Tréfeuillet, at Paris.

DEAR LOUISE— *February* 15.

I AM just back from seeing the conscription at the chief town of our canton (Champ-les-Nèfles), and I am sorry to say it is all up with *ce pauvre* Floupineau in whom we both took so much interest. I told you, in the letter I sent you yesterday, how M. Marceau and his *protégé* had been arrested on the 12th, and had been kept in prison until it was too late to take out the insurance policy for which we had subscribed. All depended, therefore, on the chance of the lottery-box, and that chance has proved unfavourable. I asked the General to take me with him to attend the drawing. I had never seen the sight before, and I must confess it is a very harrowing one, notwithstanding the boisterous merriment with which some of the peasants, but especially the soldiers [acting, I believe, by the General's orders] endeavour to surround it. The two churches of Champs-les-Nèfles were packed—packed is literally the word, my dear—by women who had come to pray and offer tapers for their sons, brothers, or sweethearts. It made me almost cry to see them. Some had been there as early as six o'clock, and did not intend rising from their knees until the drawing was over, and they knew for certain whether their prayers had availed. The Virgin's altar was one mass of flowers, and the Virgin's statue was so loaded with wreaths and chaplets that scarcely any of it could be seen. In the streets there must have been at least a dozen fortune-tellers—gipsy-women for the most part—who promised good luck to those who crossed their hands with silver. I noticed that these women all disappeared, as if by magic, when the clock struck nine, and the doors of the Mairie were thrown open for the drawing. There were soldiers of the Hussars and 103rd in great numbers interspersed amongst the crowd. They drank with the peasants, told them stories which I am sure must have been untrue, and tried by every means possible to excite them to ardour for the service. Some of the officers did the same. I saw my cousin, Henri de Marcelay, going about in full uniform and making himself affable with the villagers, joking with them and offering them cigars. I told him afterwards it was a shame to deceive the poor fellows so; but he says it is better than letting them grow riotous and then being obliged to punish them. When the doors of the Mairie were opened, the crowd burst in like a mill-stream broken loose, and the council-room was filled in an instant. The General, the Prefect, the other authorities, and I, went in by the private door; and when we came on to the platform at one end of the room, the peasants and soldiers, who appeared in high good-humour, clapped their hands, and cheered us loudly. I was the only lady in the hall, and this made a ploughboy fancy it might be lucky if he touched my hand. He clambered over the benches, elbowed his way through the gendarmes; and notwithstanding the police-

men, who pulled him back by the collar and seized hold of him by the legs, he managed to hoist himself up to the railing of the platform, and supporting himself by one hand held out the other for me to shake. I thought he deserved to be rewarded for his pains, so I shook hands with him, and wished him good luck, to the great delight of the audience, who shouted "*Bravo!*" "*Vive Madame la Générale!*" A few minutes later, this boy drew number 127, which exempted him from service, and then there was a perfect whirlwind of applause. The good fortune was all laid to me, and when I left the Mairie, after the drawing was over, I found the boy standing by my carriage with his hat off, and a large nosegay in his hand, which he offered with an effusion of thanks that rather embarrassed me. I suppose you know what the drawing of lots is like, dear Louise. There is a cylindrical box hung on pivots, between two uprights, and filled inside with as many tickets as there are young men on the muster list. There were a hundred and forty in our canton; and as the Government generally takes about half, it was understood that all the tickets bearing a number below seventy, would entail enrolment. Each of the young men comes up as his name is called, gives the whirligig a turn, then dips his hand in and pulls out a ticket. M. Robert Marceau was amongst the first to come up. He is really as self-possessed as a king, that young man. He bowed to me, and I could see by the look of acknowledgment he gave me that he guessed it was I who had sent to warn him that he was going to be arrested, just as he had divined before that it was I who had enclosed him the 100 francs for Floupineau. He mounted the steps of the platform, very smart and fresh, and made the Prefect laugh by saying, in his cool way, that he had been in fear the night before he might be deprived of the honour of attending the conscription. The number he drew was 138, the highest but two: so that even had he not been insured, as it appears he was, he would have been exempted. The General recommended him to be off at once for Paris, and not come back till he was a barrister, and grown out of trick-playing. He laughed and stood aside to make way for poor Floupineau, who came up next, with his eyes starting and his face as red as a poppy. The General, who had been looking at him, said, laughing: "You would make a capital dragoon, my boy. It is to be hoped Fortune will have the good sense to think so." And sure enough, the next minute the unlucky young man drew out Number 2, which puts him, not into the army, but into the Marines, which is much worse, for the Marines are sent in garrison to the colonies. I hoped the boy would bear his disappointment manfully, but he seems unusually impressionable, for he cried and raved in such a dreadful fashion that he had to be removed by force. The rest of the drawing had no interest for me, for I knew none of the young men on the muster-roll. I am very sorry, however, for Floupineau, and still more so for that poor girl who is so fond of him. I spoke to the General about her, but, like all soldiers, he has no sympathy for peasant love-making. "Young men shouldn't fall in love until they have served their seven years in the

army," he says; and I can get nothing more than this out of him. I have sent an anonymous note to M. Marceau, asking him to hand over the two hundred francs to the unhappy lad to help buy some comforts or his journey to the colonies. Did I do right? The General says he will be sent to Guadeloupe or the Martinique. Pauvre Floupineau!

Your affectionate friend,

EUGÉNIE DE CAMP-CHEVRON.

Letter from M. Robert Marceau to his friend M. Gustave Dumoncel.

MY DEAR DUMONCEL— *2nd March.*

WHEN you receive this I shall be on my way to Brest with a Government order of enrolment in the Imperial Marines. I have offered myself as a substitute for Floupineau, and the Council of Revision have accepted me. Frankly, I could scarcely do less, for it was clearly my fault if Floupineau was not insured. Besides, he would have made a poor soldier, would this love-stricken Melibœus; and I think I can render more valuable service to the State in the character of a docile recruit than he could ever have done as a Marine, eternally despondent and goggle-eyed. If there is any stuff in me, I ought to be able to carve my way as well in life with a blue tunic on my back as with a black stuff gown and a cambric fall: it will only be a question of biceps instead of lungs. This is the view my father takes, and he will not be very sorry, for he has never had much opinion of talking professions, his own idea of a desirable existence being pipeclay and drill in alternate doses. As for Floupineau and Mdlle. Annette, they are to be married in three weeks. I shall not have sailed for the West Indies by that time, so that I shall ask for a two days' leave in order to come back and—by my bucolic friend's special request—give away the bride. Kind remembrances, old fellow, to you and all the set, from yours and theirs affectionately and marinely,

ROBERT MARCEAU, *future Field-Marshal.*

P.S.—The only bad part of the business is the allegiance to the Dynasty. It must be full and without alloy now; platonism won't do. If you send me any paper henceforth, mind and let it be the *Officiel*.

"Oh! it's you, is it, Hempriggs?"

Against Time.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Childersleigh at Home.

IF the shareholders had reason to be satisfied, assuredly the Governor and the Directors had no cause to complain. Their fixed appointments were liberal to excess, their contingent ones munificent to extravagance. Mr. Childersleigh, to begin with, enjoyed as a certainty something little less than the salary of a Cabinet Minister. The Deputy-Governor, and Mr. Hemprigge, the Managing Director, each received the equivalent of a judge's retiring pension; while for attending infrequent courts, or attaching occasional autographs, the rank and file of the Board drew the emoluments of stipendiary magistrates. But all that was dwarfed to insignificance by the percentage they became entitled to under the articles of association on the gross profits of each of the Company's transactions. It was distributed among them in proportions left to their own discretion, a delicate and considerate arrangement, as then the full amount of their receipts stared neither them nor the shareholders conspicuously in the face in the annual balance-sheets. Indeed they remained very much of a mystery to all but those the most nearly concerned. Naturally the lion's share of the fund in question was apportioned to the Governor, the animating spirit of the whole, the man whose versatile talents, social or commercial, were always straining themselves for the benefit of the Company, who was equally at home in negotiating complex financial transactions with foreign capitalists, hard as flints, sharp as razors, smooth and treacherous as tigers, or in doing the honours of the Crédit Foncier to its connection, blending sets and ranks in his hospitable dining-room in a genial fellowship.

It was hardly to be wondered at that his peculiar position should make him a little more grasping than he would otherwise have shown himself. But in discussing with Mr. Hemprigge the allocation of the Directors'

indirect remuneration, before submitting a proposal on the subject to the Board, he had been disagreeably astonished to find a good deal of stolid resistance dexterously insinuated by that gentleman. Hemprigge, indeed, professed himself satisfied and gratified with the share destined to him, —as, indeed, he might be; nor did he take direct exception to that which Hugh proposed to appropriate. But he hinted at the policy of dealing by the others with a freer hand, the more gratuitously, as it struck the Governor, that no one of the parties more nearly interested expressed dissatisfaction when asked to ratify the suggested arrangements. For Hugh had his way in the end, yielding but very slightly to the amendments moved by his colleague. The little difference, however, led him to vex himself with much speculation on Hemprigge's motives; for we regret to say it never once occurred to him to give the Managing Director credit for the disinterestedness he claimed. The cloud passed away, but it left a coolness, which Hemprigge thenceforth strove ceaselessly to remove. You would have said that, having discharged a most painful duty in speaking out his opinion as to the reasonable emoluments of the Governor, he had found a positive relief and pleasure in being overruled. He appeared too eager to prove, by his redoubled zeal for the interests of his colleague, that he had acted very much against the grain upon purely public grounds.

Hugh liked his work and he liked the money it brought him, and when the novelty had worn away of having found an object that constantly occupied his thoughts and time, the first enjoyable excitement calmed down into something that was even more agreeable. Then he found himself continually forgetting the end in the means, and following out the business of the hour without bestowing a thought on the future he was working for. At the same time all earthly joys have their alloy, and the very fulness of prosperity brings a bitter of its own. His income was a large one, far larger than he could have hoped; and although it was in some measure precarious, it made him feel already more independent of the fortune he was striving after. But the greater it grew and the more rumour magnified it, the more false did his position threaten to become. It was his acknowledged social standing, rather than business talents which were a secret to all the world, that had recommended him originally for his post; and when the Board placidly yielded him so much of the common remuneration, it was on the implication that much of it should be lavished in advertising. There was a tacit understanding—or so he felt, at least, —that he should entertain the investing public on a generous scale and keep a hospitable house.

His own tastes, as we know, tended naturally to the magnificent, and he hated that any one should say he stinted where he was bound to spend, or that he did his colleagues less than lavish justice. Had he had no ulterior views of his own he would have asked nothing better than to move into a more spacious mansion and throw it open to all comers. The less he liked his guests individually the more it would have pleased him to

make his invitations indiscriminate; the more of them he crowded together the less was he put out himself, for the larger his parties the more of an official character they assumed. The comparatively modest dimensions of the Harley Street rooms gave the gathering there a tone something too friendly to suit his tastes, and he moved through them in a continual dread of having to submit blandly to be button-holed and badgered.

In casual conversation with Hemprigge, he had alluded to his preoccupations on this score, half hoping that a gentleman who knew his aims so well would pronounce for prudence and the propriety of staying quietly in his present quarters. To his surprise, Hemprigge, although he certainly did speak much as was expected of him, did it in a way that left more to be inferred than Childersleigh liked. Puffing out his cheeks, nodding his head, and looking, as Hugh thought, abominably vulgar and familiar, he spoke of not minding anything the world might say in a way that led the Governor to think the world had been talking more than he had supposed. Whereupon, however, he came characteristically to the sage conclusion, that it being evidently idle to attempt to satisfy a world so exacting and unreasonable, the wisest thing he could do was to remain where he was and go on acting as he had been doing; to keep his eye on the main chance and the golden prize, taking good care in the meantime not to let penny wisdom make him pound foolish, and without plunging into extravagance, to err, if anything, on the side of liberality.

When entertainments were so frequent, it was evident one must be given to celebrate so great an event as a general meeting and the first declaration of a dividend. Accordingly two-and-twenty guests were bidden to Harley Street, the extreme number its dining-room could contain with comfort.

"What sort of dinner are we to have to-day, Hugh?" demanded Rushbrook, strolling into the drawing-room, where he found his cousin standing alone on the hearth, glancing over the summary of the day's proceedings in the evening paper. His lordship was occupying a bedroom in the house.

"A good one, I hope, and am happy to believe, for I am most outrageously hungry. I think we may trust to Casserole, and there's one good thing about these business spreads: the men carry their City punctuality into their dinner engagements, and if your *chef* feels they may not appreciate all the refinements of his art, at least he knows his genius has fair play and he may satisfy his conscience."

"Then he can always rely on one connoisseur, eh, Hugh? But I did not refer to the *matériel* of the feast. I only wish I knew that all the departments of the Company were as admirably filled as your kitchen, and that its strong-box would always be as well provided as your larder. What I mean is, whom are we going to have?"

"The Board to a man, I fancy, unless, indeed, Delacour throws us over. He held out hopes he might."

"Heaven grant it!" parenthesised Lord Rushbrook.

"And a few others admitted on a very high property qualification. Not a man of them with less than his half-million or thereabouts. Reynardson comes to represent the Church. After his speech of to-day, I shall always say no man has a more profound insight into character; and then there's that little Belgian rascal, Dumont, who so nearly legged us in the matter of the Montenegran loan."

"Quite right: there's nothing in better taste than honouring an honourable adversary. He's an amusing little beggar too, if his English were only a shade more intelligible, and there he has the advantage of most of the others. But here comes one of them, confound him, and it wants ten minutes of eight still!"

A ring, a rush of feet, a name tossed like a tennis-ball from mouth to mouth, and landing up to landing, the door is flung open, and enter Mr. Hemprigge.

That gentleman, as he mounted the stairs, had marked with an interest he always exhibited all the signs of display, and had rapidly run through some mental calculations as to the weight Mr. Childersleigh might be charging himself with, in this race of his for the 200,000*l*. Hugh had done little to the house since it came into his hands, and its departed owner, had she revisited her late dwelling, need have had little difficulty in identifying it. Faded carpets had given place to fresher ones, some articles of furniture had been renewed, and, in particular, the stiff-backed chairs and uncompromising sofas had been cashiered in favour of a profusion of luxurious ones. But on principle, and under the peculiar circumstances in which he occupied the house, Hugh set his face against show, and declined to brand himself a *nouveau riche* and make a vulgar match of it with mushroom capitalists.

Everything about him argued the assured position and unassuming wealth that have no need to puff themselves. In the interests of the Company, at whose board he had found a seat, Mr. Marxby had consented to the transfer of some of the old family portraits that had gemmed the walls at Childersleigh. Now, in the dining-room at Harley Street, black-velvet doublets and Flemish ruffs, lovelocks, cuirasses and slashed satin hose, patches, powder, and diamond-clustered stomachers, epaulettes and pigtails, Antonio Mores, Vandykes, Lelys, Gainsboroughs, and Reynoldses, looked down on the gold-grubbers at their feasts. Ancient walnut buffets, black as ebony, threw out in relief the massive plate that loaded them, from a pair of salvers by Cellini to cups won for Hugh's grandfather by his prize pigs.

"Queer fancy, a swell like Childersleigh going in so hard for business," some awestruck guest, oppressed by those unaccustomed magnificences, would whisper to his neighbour.

"A very good thing for us though," the other would chuckle back, "and only shows what a rare turn he has for it." So for once pictures, and the precious metals in the unremunerative shape of plate, yielded their owner substantial returns.

Frequent visits ought to have familiarized Hemprigge with all this splendour, yet he dwelt upon it now with unimpaired complacency. His spirits rose as he passed from the chilly street into a hall all ablaze with lights and liveries, and looked in at the open door of the heavy-curtained dining-room where a thousand flames were dancing on silver and crystal. "All my doing, too," he told himself inwardly with excusable pride, as he stole his hands toward each other to indulge them in a furtive rub, while his neat little person swelled itself proudly, and his heart throbbed up against his embroidered shirt-front and diamond studs. When he followed his name into the drawing-room, he felt much like Mr. Childersleigh's patron saint come condescendingly to take pot luck at that gentleman's board.

He had arrived early, in the chance of having a few words quietly with Hugh, and giving his friend the Governor an opportunity of gracefully smoothing down the plumes Rushbrook's speech had ruffled. And lo! Rushbrook in person stepping forward to greet him with an air of flattering intimacy as he seldom wore, just as if his eulogy of the afternoon had been all it professed to be.

"Oh! it's you, is it, Hemprigge? Come early to have a quiet laugh at the proceedings of the day before the others turn up? Capital fun these solemn meetings are, to be sure; I never saw grave comedy better put upon any stage. Not a theatre in town could touch it. The whole thing was inimitable."

"Well, for my part, my lord——"

"Ah, yes, what an excellent speech that was of yours. Not a bit too much of it, but all well chosen and to the purpose. And not a man of them, except, perhaps, Hugh there, knew that you and I were laughing all the time at each other and every one else."

Hemprigge was quite aware his lordship was far too intelligent to expect to take him in by this affectation of friendly *bonhomie*, and perhaps he might have vindicated his own shrewdness by intimating as much and retorting. But just then the door opening again made him pause and think. Better than most men, he knew the value of keeping on good terms with dignitaries, especially when they were at once rich and needy. So, as Lord Rushbrook chose to be intimate and pleasant, he made up his mind not to baulk him, but by parading his present affectionate familiarity, protect himself as far as he could against injury from his future outbreaks.

The new arrival was McAlpine, who came striding into the room the very picture of bluff health, and as unlike a man who had passed the best of his life in the Indies as could well be imagined.

"How do you do again, Childersleigh? I'm glad to see some one before me, but Hemprigge there always is beforehand with his play and his work. The truth is, with fair travelling I can generally time my pace to a yard, but then it's no such easy matter allowing for all the crossings between this and Notting Hill."

"You don't mean to tell us you've walked?"

"Every yard of the road. After sitting so many years in that infernal Suddur Court at Jubbulpore, my legs take a deal of stretching. Then I like to keep myself in condition for the Gartnacaber hills. You ought to know something of them, Childersleigh, but I think they're a bit stiffer in my country than over with your people in Killoden. Besides, when I walk to my dinner I generally find my appetite has got there before me, and that's the way to make sure of one pleasant companion, let me tell you."

But early as Hemprigge and McAlpine had come, they had no monopoly of overstrained punctuality. Already a noise as of a Pickford's van on wheels, followed by a crash at the knocker, told of some less unassuming arrival, and enter Budger, who, in the earlier part of his life, having limited his aspirations to boots rather than carriages, could now-a-days no more move without wheels than his massive watch. To the east of Charing Cross station he never showed except through the windows of his huge caravan; its orange panels relieved by its crimson liveries. Then the steady rat-tat at the door made the closing it almost a form, and the rooms began to fill fast. From habit, perhaps, even pending the imminent announcement of dinner, most of the assembled guests seemed to busy themselves with business in one form or another.

Childersleigh was the centre of a group who thought rightly that, in default of any more immediate objects, it was always a sage thing to pay homage to the Governor. Rushbrook was in the middle of another, who eagerly availed themselves of the chance of improving their acquaintance with the future peer. Among these Budger was conspicuous, specially instructed to that effect by Mrs. B., and charged with the delicate mission of securing his noble brother director for one of his chaste little dinners. The Argive brothers, Theologos and Andreas, who were dreaming of some kite-flying on a mammoth scale, had pinioned the Managing Director down on an ottoman between them, and were plying him with compliments, which he managed to swallow somehow, although his sense shrunk from such highly sugared *bonbons*. Dumont had button-holed Houssein Pacha: for men were talking of a radical change of men and measures at Constantinople, and Young Turkey might be called to power and concessions might be going a-begging. Schwartzchild, accustomed to move a minor planet among small satellites of his own, and now neglected for ambiguous meteors and shooting-stars, gloomed sullenly under a curtain; and Rolfganger, left in equal isolation, shrugged his shoulders, not ill-pleased, and picked up the *Pall Mall* Hugh had thrown down.

"Mr. Childersleigh, served!" As each man felt constrained to wait for some one else to show the way, there was a jealous jam by the door, followed by a desperate scramble, when the host, offering the *pas* to the Turk, proceeded to pilot the way. At the head of his table he was supported by Houssein Pacha on the one side, while Sir Ralph Palliser, with serene self-respect, had elbowed his way into the vacant place on the other. Dumont, with the tenacity and assurance of his breed, still clung to the honoured Mussulman, who for his part was not sorry to find a sprightly

neighbour, who could chatter to him in a tongue he was familiar with. At the other end was Rushbrook, radiant at having manœuvred Budger out of either seat on his right hand and his left. One of them he had quietly secured for Rolfganger, while old Mr. Cox, of Cox, Barber and Co., the Company's bankers, a quiet humorous individual, gifted with the useful knack of unobtrusively appreciating any good things that might be going, had managed to drop into the other.

At first the party was far from a lively one, spite of the laudable efforts of the host to promote something like general conversation. Nothing in nature perhaps is more susceptible than a society of millionnaires, and few things more distrustful than a party of competing capitalists. To do away with the initial objection to making an easy gathering out of materials so repellent, precedence should be utterly abolished by some such device as John o' Groat is said to have adopted in his patriarchal household, where each man, entering by a door of his own, took his seat at what he might call the top of his own table. Order of rank must become a question of credit when you settle it by sheer income, and where money means merit it is a matter of character and vanity as well.

However, the starch began to dissolve in the turtle and the wine, and by the time the decanters were in rapid revolution after dinner, all were in train, and as playful and genial as it was in their nature to be. But it was fortunate, perhaps, for Childersleigh that most of what was passing at the other end of the table was lost in the noise of the intermittent skirmish on Oriental politics fought out around him in shrieking French. For Lord Rushbrook, once more slightly oblivious of his responsibilities, was in his element, drawing recklessly on the good faith of his neighbours, and assenting gravely to the very startling social and political theories he persuaded some of them to hazard. Mr. Cox, who liked fun as much as he hated new men, was actively abetting; so was McAlpine, who was blessed with a marvellous control of countenance; and so unwittingly was Budger, whose earnest warmth it was that at last "parted that fair company."

"By the way, I hear the East London Relief Committee have applied to the Board for a subscription," observed Dr. Reynardson, interposing himself as peacemaker in a rather hot argument. "I suppose there *is* suffering among the lower orders," he went on, swaying a glass of very old Madeira against the light, and regarding it with a languid amorousness.

"If I have any voice in the matter," vociferated Budger, "I should say, not one shilling. Depend on it, that ninety-nine times in a hundred, when a man starves the fault's his own. Show me a pauper, and I'll show you a rascal. Make pauperism penal, I say, if you want to have done with it once and for ever."

"Of course, to a great extent we must all be inclined to subscribe to those very moderate observations of yours, Mr. Budger," rejoined Lord Rushbrook, "and without going quite to the length you do, I am of opinion it might be right and expedient generally to condemn poverty to what I might call a negative proscription—to leave it to look after itself and

take its chance. But, with regard to that hundredth case you speak of, where you admit the pauper may not be wholly to blame, how should you propose dealing with that?"

"Oh, it's not worth while stopping to take every separate case into consideration. Besides, it would do far more harm than good, and open a door for deceit and all manner of rascality. Depend upon it, they're all tarred with very much the same brush, those beggars. There must be people out of luck in the world; but that's no reason why their betters should be bothered and robbed on the chance of helping them. I say again, every man for himself, and let them as can't help themselves go to the wall."

"The question is one beset with difficulties," suggested Rushbrook gravely. "If they go to the wall instead of the workhouse, sooner or later you'll have to sacrifice your principles and take them in hand, for your own sake, were it only to bury them."

"So you may, and a very great shame and hardship it is; but then, mark this, my lord, you don't give up your principles at all. You do it for your own sake, not for theirs. That's the difference. Ah, if we could only bring things to that point, we might afford to leave the rest to time. No, no, none of your philanthropy and humbug for me. I'm all for justice, and the plain, common-sense view of things.

"Well, but to come back to the subscription they ask us for, what do you say to that, doctor?" asked Rushbrook. "You differ from Mr. Budger, I know, for I saw your name figuring conspicuously on their list."

The doctor blushed slightly. His name had figured for a couple of guineas, and now he regretted perhaps that he had not listened to the voice of vanity, and made the two ten or even twenty, as he had once thought of doing.

"It's a difficult question, as you observe very justly, my lord; and, my own experience having lain, I am glad to say, mainly among a very different class,—a question, perhaps, I am less able to solve than another; but for myself I am so far inclined to agree with Mr. Budger, that I believe poverty to be for the most part the appointed penalty of vice, and that again brings us face to face with our consciences. In taking wholesale steps to relieve it, may we not be flying in the face of Providence?"

"It was selfishness, doctor, maybe," interposed McAlpine, "but I remember well when I was at Jubbulpore in the famine year, that the sight of the niggers dying by hundreds all around me took away my appetite more than the sun; and the thermometer would have stood at 120° in the shade, if there had been any. If I had not spared them a few of my rupees, upon my honour I don't believe I should have been able to dine at all. Perhaps it's superstitious too, but for my own part I don't believe the Crédit Foncier of Turkey would be a grain the poorer for sending the committee a cheque for a few hundreds."

"The very thing I was thinking myself," exclaimed honest Mr. Marxby, who was little given to talking, but who could feel with all the

vigour of a florid constitution. "The pleasure of a glass of wine with you, Mr. McAlpine?"

"Well, well," remarked Doctor Reynardson, "charity's an admirable virtue when you can practise it with a pure conscience, and I have no doubt whatever the Board will exercise a wise discretion."

"To be very frank with you, Doctor," retorted McAlpine, "I think Budger's position more defensible than yours, and I'm not sure I don't like his practice nearly as well. It's true you profess to allow Charity all manner of freedom, but you look after her so carefully all the time that, for any good you let her do, you might just as well keep her at home with yourself. Now that's what Budger does. He loves her so much that he monopolizes her, and every beggar knows exactly where to have him. He would have the poor-laws written in blood, and make death the penalty for a breach of them."

"Yes, by —— I would! Mr. McAlpine," shouted Budger, dimly conscious he was being ridiculed, and bringing down his fist on the table, with an emphasis that made the plates and the glasses dance again.

"*Parait que ca chauffe là bas,*" remarked Dumont, breaking off in a voluble exposition of the advantages of extending the Crédit Foncier's operations to Russia, and regarding the other end of the table through his eyeglass.

"Yes, really, I think you had better ring for coffee, and have some liqueurs thrown on the troubled waters, Childersleigh," said Sir Ralph. "If you were to give us a specimen of your skill in brute-taming, and rub down that animal Budger, now?" he added in a whisper.

"Much better leave him to Rushbrook," responded Hugh, coolly. "He's rising, and has his eye on him, I see, and will have his arm through his in another moment. There's nothing so soothing to Budger as being smoothed down by a viscount."

"Yes; there's no accounting for tastes, but I should say Rushbrook and Budger seem made for each other, and I've no doubt they have both thoroughly enjoyed the evening."

It was more than the host could say. As he mounted the stairs to his bedroom, after dismissing the last of his guests, he soliloquized with a weary sigh: "It's all very well, the business part of it, but confound the pleasure."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Waif washed to Land.

Lucy Winter did pay a long visit to "The Cedars." As months slipped away, she and every one else came to look upon the place as her home. Maude had taken to petting her *protégée* from the day she carried her off; and, first for his daughter's sake, afterwards for his own, Sir Basil, in his

own stately way, did the same. At first Lucy, regarding herself as a burden her entertainers had charitably charged themselves with, was given to attempting awkward little speeches about relieving them of it. But as there was nowhere else in the wide world for her to go—as she had no plans whatever, even of the vaguest—and as Maude would never listen to her seriously, she became sensitively alive to the absurdity of volunteering them, and resigned herself accordingly. Then, as her shyness and self-distrust wore away, she came to see that she really counted for something in the household, and could not help flattering herself they would miss her were she gone. Maude, to be sure, did her very best to spoil her. At first it was with something of an effort she had lavished the blandishments of which she was generally so chary, and as a penitent atonement for previous neglect; but first it grew into a habit, and then a pleasure. Among her many luxuries she had never before enjoyed a friendship, and possibly never would have indulged in one had she been obliged to contract it upon equal terms and fair give-and-take principles. She was too domineering and unyielding for that; far too intolerant of conventional sentiment and feminine exactions. But she looked on Lucy as something of her own, with which there could be no manner of rivalry, with which it was needless to stand on the defensive, and impossible to take offence. She set herself the task of forming her, conceding her, in the meantime, the freest liberty of thought and speech—a liberty which Lucy, to be sure, was the last person in the world to abuse. But Maude liked her all the better that she could respect her too; for Lucy spoke her mind if she spoke it gently, and neither for love nor gratitude concealed her sentiments.

Then Maude's liking throve the more that at first she had to champion her friend in her family. To Sir Basil, in a matter of this sort, his daughter's will was law, and he would have breathed but faint remonstrances against any companion she was likely to introduce to his household. But principle conspired with instinct to prevent his ignoring the gulf that divided a capitalist of position from a pauper with none at all, even if the pauper was pretty and in petticoats. After her engaging manners had begun to demoralize him, the earlier efforts of his good nature to bridge the gulf were still somewhat too apparent; and it was his daughter's constant care to make them show less conspicuously to Lucy and come more easily to him. At last, her thoughtfulness and watchful tact had their reward. Sir Basil was relieved to find himself treating Lucy as something of his daughter's, and consequently of his own, and having once or twice committed himself obliviously, came gradually with a quiet conscience to be easy and even affectionate with her. Independently of the unobtrusive gratitude that repaid him, he found his recompence, perhaps, in the more demonstrative warmth of his daughter's affection; and Lucy's position at "The Cedars" was the better assured, that its master felt she had been a godsend to them, and her presence had brightened up his household.

Purkiss had looked unlovingly on this caprice of his sister, and regarded its domestication with an evil eye. At first he oscillated between supercilious civility and a parade of indifference which would have appeared absolute rudeness to one less humble than Lucy. But while she seemed to accept it in her patience as a matter of course, it often made her friend Maude flush up, and bite her lips, and show her teeth, in a way that Purkiss marked and trembled at. If there was one thing he shrunk from more than another, it was a passage of words with his sister. Experience told him that a rally of the sort always left her with the best of it; that she generally rolled his dignity in the dust, and left him with some unanswered taunt to rankle in his bosom. As she frightened him into an outward courteousness of behaviour, he had to fall back on revenging himself quietly, as best he could. His ingenuity not being altogether on a par with his malice, his vengeance generally took the shape of assuming, as a matter of course, that Lucy's visit was drawing to a close. As Maude had no intention of risking any secret arrangement she might contemplate by prematurely startling either Lucy or her father, she found herself on these occasions tongue-tied and proportionately savage.

"Do you know, I begin rather to like that little *protégée* of yours?" Purkiss would observe to his sister with condescending good-humour. "Really we shall miss her. She's very unassuming and well-behaved, and all things considered, by no means so very awkward or unidea'd."

"I am sure she ought to be highly flattered by the good opinion of a man like you," Maude would rejoin with a smile of ominous sweetness, but striving hard, for the sake of Lucy's comfort, to avoid aggravating her brother's hostility.

"Yes, indeed," Purkiss would go on, blind to the danger-signals flying, or reckless. "I do wish we could find a good place for her somewhere—a companionship like what she had before, I fancy, would suit her best. She hasn't education enough for a governess?"

"I think I told you I find her a great pleasure, and hope to prevail on her to put off thinking of plans in the meantime," Maude would rejoin, her brow blackening a good deal as the thunder-clouds began to roll up on it.

"Yes, that's all very well, and very kindly meant," Purkiss would go on, rather nervous, although quite unable to deny himself the rare pleasure of making Maude thoroughly angry; "but it really isn't quite fair to the girl. You should recollect that although we may be doing it all with the best intentions, our charity is accustoming her to a life utterly different to anything she can look forward to. Your own excellent sense must tell you it would have been better for her, had you left her in charge of Mrs. Parkyns, or if you were to bring her here, if you had sent her down at once to the housekeeper's room."

"I am sure, Purkiss, whatever may be in store for her, if she does not accustom herself to insult and vulgarity, you need never blame yourself. If she is poor, really for once you ought to be lenient to poverty.

She got very little more than you from Miss Childersleigh, although it's true she did not take nearly so much trouble to get it."

"Once for all, Maude ——"

"Oh, I can make every allowance for your vexation. It must be very trying for a busy man to have wasted so much of the time he might have employed to so much better purpose. It's hard indeed to have been grovelling in the dust so long only to pick yourself up with empty hands and find every one laughing at you. But think what a comfort it is, after all, that you were born to a good business with other people to manage it. What in the world would have become of you, Purkiss, had you had to make one for yourself, like Hugh?"

Nothing stung Purkiss more infallibly than any allusion to Hugh's success, except, perhaps, a depreciation of the business talents he prided himself on. Either one or the other was sufficient to put him to sulky flight with ample food for sullen meditation. Then Maude would blame herself for making mischief, and form virtuous resolutions against the use of poisoned weapons in the future, resolutions sure to be broken on the next temptation. And Purkiss cultivated hypocrisy among his other accomplishments, and taught himself to appear to tolerate Lucy's society and even enjoy it, relieving the bitterness of his suppressed feelings in occasional outbreaks of spleen. In reality he honoured this innocent cause of his mortification with a special hatred, while he cherished all the time his standing aversion to Hugh, and contrived after all to have a good deal of dislike to spare for his sister.

George Childersleigh contrasted his brother in most things, and in nothing more than his behaviour to the new inmate of the household. Maude had thanked him often for the suggestion that sent her to Harley Street, and tacitly made over to him in gratitude a share of the ownership in Lucy. Not that it needed more than her forlorn condition to dispose George in Lucy's favour. His unaffected manner set her at ease with him from the first, and although she was perturbed at the announcement of the earliest of his visits, afterwards her only sensations were those of pleasure at the prospect of the good-humoured addition to their quiet party.

Sir Basil delighted in having his favourite son with him, and George was in the habit of sacrificing a good deal to gratify him, always grumbling at the expenditure of his valuable time, involved in those frequent journeys to the wilds of Hampstead. Purkiss, who could no more read his brother than the Septuagint in the original, and who fell into the absurd but not unnatural error of studying him by reference to himself, attributed the attentions he bestowed on his family to motives not dissimilar to those that had sent himself to Harley Street, in the late Miss Childersleigh's time. In which he did his brother gross injustice, and proved himself nearly as subtle a student of human nature as he was an agreeable member of society. George was pleased to please his father, and treading firmly on the path of duty, merely exercised the inalienable prerogative of a Briton in grumbling at its thorns. Insensibly he began to find that the changed

state of things at "The Cedars" made this duty more of a pleasure, and he was grateful accordingly.

"I'll tell you what it is, Maude," he remarked one evening to his sister, as she followed him into the hall to thank him with a curtsey and a kiss for having honoured them by keeping his cab standing at the door for a couple of hours—"I'll tell you what it is. Now that you two girls have got together, you do brighten each other up amazingly. The evenings fly twice as quick as they used to."

"*Merci, monsieur*, for the compliment—to Lucy," she rejoined, taking no offence apparently at its equivocal character, but looking steadily in his face.

"Not at all, Maude, not at all;" and in his frank tones he answered her looks, not her words. "I assure you I'm more in love with you than with your friend, and if she has gained the most in the brightening process, it is only because she had the more to gain. Think what a little lady of the sorrowful countenance she was when she came, pricking her ears nervously when any one spoke to her, and glancing up with her soft eyes through her long brown hair, like a beaten setter. Now, she really seems in the way to make my father a boy; and as for you——"

"Well, as to me, what?"

"As for you, I was going to say, she has made you a girl again—sometimes a child. I may tell you now, I began to fear you had grown a woman for good and all; and you know I delight in children. But good-night, dear. If you keep me here to all hours in this way, you must get Miss Winter to persuade the governor to increase my allowance, or I shall ruin myself out and out in cab-fares."

It said a good deal for Maude that she betrayed no twinge of jealousy at hearing her friend praised so warmly by her favourite brother, and somewhat at her own expense. For a moment she had been startled by the idea that unawares he might have stolen into love with Lucy. Maude had been much too carefully trained from the cradle to be anything but shocked at a Childersleigh, of Lombard Street, marrying the sweetest girl in the world without a suitable fortune; but George's unembarrassed and voluntary disavowal of the weakness her look had charged him with quite reassured her.

"He is frank, at any rate," she said. "He never does tell fibs, and, moreover, if he were to try, he couldn't help betraying himself to save his life."

When she went back to the drawing-room, looking at Lucy curiously as she had never done before, she conscientiously congratulated herself that George had passed at once to brotherly relations, escaping heart-whole from a danger she had never feared for him, but which she confessed now might have been serious.

Lucy, her face slightly flushed from the heat of the rooms, her eyes still sparkling from the animated chat of a pleasant evening, was handing Sir Basil the candle she had lighted him, and offering her cheek to his paternal salute.

"Her features are certainly not so good as mine," soliloquized Maude, candidly appraising their respective advantages; "and I don't think her figure is; but what expression the child has, and how her mouth softens and her eyes sparkle as she speaks. I begin to think George must either be much less susceptible or much more sensible than I believed. I don't know, I'm sure, whether it's the one or the other, but in either case it's very lucky."

The truth was, although it was she who had warmed Lucy out of her chrysalis husk, it was only now and of a sudden the effect of the transformation burst upon her. Yet without *arrière pensée* she followed up Sir Basil's kiss with one of her own, which Lucy, not unaccustomed to these motiveless caresses on the part of the undemonstrative Maude, proceeded forthwith to repay with ample usury.

As for Hugh, he had stepped back into something like his old easy footing with them all. At least, he went and came as he pleased. Not so frequently, perhaps, as in the old times; but then these had changed in more ways than one. Now he was a busy man, with a multiplicity of engagements on his hands, and endless calls on his time. When he made his appearance, Sir Basil always seemed glad to see him, although he welcomed him perhaps with more respect and less cordiality than he used to do. For Hugh was growing rich fast. He appeared in a very fair way to claim Miss Childersleigh's succession. But happen what might in regard to that, meantime he might enjoy most things that money could give him,—not the least of them the respect of the City and the world. The reputation of his connections at the west, with the quiet unassuming courtesy of manner that no success had spoiled, made him generally popular, and even the most conservative of the hereditary magnates of Lombard Street were inclined to except him from the contempt and dislike they lavished on their rivals of the rising school. Sir Basil had come to hear his kinsman's praises sung in his very *sanctum* at "Childersleigh's," and from lips to which even he listened with respect.

The great Lord Richborough himself, head of the mighty house of Gold, Mammon and Co., had condescended to make an exception in Mr. Childersleigh's favour in the general tirade he levelled at the rogues and fools who pretended to be answerable for an amount of capital as little at their call as the suns that might be circulating among the planets.

"I will say, Childersleigh, your nephew—eh, he's not your nephew?—well, that young relative of yours, must have a fair notion of business. Far too venturesome, of course, he is; but then, with all these new men, it comes to a question of hit or miss. I for one should not be surprised if he were to steer that concern of his—what is it they call it?—through the storm these fellows are brewing for us."

No wonder, then, Sir Basil began to feel his hereditary reverence for the head of all the Childersleighs return again; although, as yet, a perpetual difficulty in identifying that half-mythical abstraction with this visible Hugh, who directed the offensive Crédit Foncier of Turkey, made his demeanour slightly vacillating.

The awkwardness created between Maude and Childersleigh by the passing burst of madness in the garden, seemed gradually to have worn itself away. The keenest eye would have traced nothing between them that meant anything more or less than simple friendship. Naturally he was made a subject of frequent conversation between the girls, and Maude spoke of him with a candid carelessness that must have disarmed suspicion. To be sure, with a self-possessed temperament like hers, such indications are not conclusive; and she was not unlikely, in sheer defiance of a conscious weakness, to court a subject other girls would have shunned. Lucy, on her side, never could forget that Hugh had been the first of them all to offer his friendship; and the impression left, when sorrow had made her universally susceptible to kindness, had been deepened by the delicacy of his subsequent conduct. The passing distrust, inspired by Mr. Hooker's warnings, had gone like the breath from a mirror. Still, strive as she would, perhaps because she strove, she never felt herself at home with him as with good-humoured Captain Childersleigh. Glorifying the strength that had won Hugh his easy triumphs, and the force that had changed the current of his life, she was awed and oppressed in his society by a sense of latent power. Even Maude, in her way, began to feel increased respect for the man who had developed unsuspected gifts, and he dazzled her as the brilliant architect of his golden fortunes. So the two girls, the one born to wealth, the other reared to poverty from the cradle, regarded him and his successes with not dissimilar feelings from their very opposite points of view. Many and warm were the arguments they had on a subject that seemed to have an interest for them both; and thus, somehow, Hugh and his fortunes were continually in their thoughts and on their tongues.

One day at dinner Purkiss, emptying his budget of City news, had to chronicle a fresh and extraordinary rise in the shares of the Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey. His Highness the Sultan, who was then building a new summer palace on the Bosphorus, a kiosk by the Sweet Waters of Asia, an Italian villa on the Princes' Islands, a pair of ironclads, a flotilla of gunboats, and a steam-yacht panelled in satin-wood and ivory, had been forced to make a fresh appearance on the European exchanges in search of money. Mr. Childersleigh's tact, it was rumoured, had succeeded in out-manœuvring competing capitalists, and securing the arrangement of the loan for his Company on exceptionally favourable terms. Purkiss told his tale with very mingled feelings. He had steadily increased his holdings in the Company, and the rise meant a handsome gain to him; but thinking of Hugh's much greater one, and of his growing fame to boot, he almost felt as if he would have consented to sacrifice it. Sir Basil, on the contrary, roused to honest admiration, gave the Governor great credit for succeeding in what he knew must have been a very delicate operation.

The young ladies, from habitually listening to City talk, and being frequently pressed into reading City articles to Sir Basil, were tolerably at home in City matters. Naturally, then, when they found themselves alone, they took to discussing this exciting piece of news.

"How very little one knows of the people you think you know best," began Maude, reflectively. "Two years ago, who could have suspected Mr. Childersleigh of ever becoming what he is?"

"I should have thought one could never have taken Mr. Childersleigh for anything but a very able man."

"Able, yes; I always knew he could talk, and think too, when he chose to take the trouble. Every sensible man you meet can do the one and seems to do the other. What I mean to say is, who would have given him credit for powers that work so well after rusting for a lifetime, and for the resolution to set them working just when it suited his purpose? Purkiss, for instance, has, I believe, the name of a good man of business, and he has always been practising that sort of thing; but only fancy Purkiss set to do what Mr. Childersleigh is doing!"

"Mr. Childersleigh, I am sure, has wonderful talents, and he has been wonderfully successful," said Lucy, shaking her pretty head sagely. "But for perseverance, I suspect when you once begin doing so well, the getting money becomes its own reward, and it is only too easy to go on with it."

"Why, Lucy, surely you would never call him a miser!" exclaimed Maude, looking at her in surprise.

"No, indeed, Maude, very far from that. He is generosity itself, as I have good reason to know. But it does seem a pity that a man like him should sacrifice his talents, and the very prime of his life, to work like that."

"What a strange girl you are, Lucy. I'm sure you'd find few people to agree with you as to his not making the very most of his time. Why, look at it sentimentally as you please, surely it would be positive crime to throw away golden chances like his, to say nothing of resigning himself to lose the prize he is making such a fight for. To stop short now that he has felt his power, would be really returning his talents to their napkin; and then, after all, what can a poor man do for his fellow-creatures but shrug his shoulders and pity them in miserable helplessness. In another year or two Mr. Childersleigh will have made himself a fortune, and think of all the uses he may put it to. Confess now for once you spoke thoughtlessly."

"I don't know, Maude; perhaps I did. Yet it does seem to me a man like that can't help devoting himself to work he does so well, till he comes to love it for its own sake, and then I think it almost a pity the work should not be more worthy of the man. Surely a heap of money, a little more or less, is a paltry object for Mr. Childersleigh to show as the fruits of his life's labour?"

"Why, what must you think, then, of my father, my brother, all of us?" demanded Maude, with some little irritation of manner.

"Oh, Maude, I'm sure you know I never meant that," said Lucy, blushing frightfully, and precipitating herself persistently on her friend, but with a guilty consciousness all the time that she had been speaking from

the depths of her heart, and that the unflattering meaning Maude had attached to them, was the only construction her words could bear.

"Perhaps not," returned Maude, looking at her queerly. "At any rate I'm certain you did not mean anything but what was kind."

Then, as if she wished to laugh away the thoughts Lucy had suggested, she went on, "If you mean to grub up the root of all evil, you have a rich field to go to work in here, and before attacking Mr. Childersleigh, I should suggest your trying your hand on Purkiss."

"Don't laugh, Maude; I did feel what I said, although not as you chose to take it. I am not so very sentimental. I only wish I were a man myself."

"To preach down riches or to get them? Is it interest in your fellow-creatures or envy of them that makes you wish it, dear? I do believe Mr. Childersleigh's good luck excites and depresses you, and if you had the temptation before you to-morrow, you would go treading in his very steps."

"Perhaps I should try it, and I am sure I should fail, and be rightly served. But it is not Mr. Childersleigh's riches, but his activity that I envy. He promised to help me once: if he could only find me work to do, and then leave me to do it."

"What a very masculine character you must have. But, my dear Lucy, the transformation you sigh after being impossible, why don't you do the next best thing, and address yourself to the female apostles of woman's mission? You write a neat hand, and spell nicely, and are in every way respectable, and not unattractive. I daresay, with very little interest, you could find a good place in—a telegraph office for example."

"I know, Maude, you always will laugh when I talk of doing anything for myself," responded Lucy, demurely; "but you know very well I can't consent to remain burdening you all my life."

"I don't think there's much likelihood of that, and for my own sake I'm very sorry for it. In the meantime, as you long for occupation, suppose you come and practise that duet I brought out this afternoon."

Whatever the future might have in store for her, Lucy's lines could hardly in the meantime have fallen in pleasanter places. Purkiss was there, it is true; but all mortal joys have their alloys, and no earthly Eden is without its centipedes, and earwigs, and other crawling things.

CHAPTER XV.

Ulysses Stops his Ears to the Sirens.

There had been a great dinner at Hestercombe House, and Lady Hestercombe was receiving in the evening. It was to be the last before the family left town for the season—on that account, perhaps, a trifle less select than the gatherings in that exclusive mansion generally were. Lord Hestercombe was punctiliously particular as to never giving needless

offence to acquaintances, and her ladyship, like the excellent wife she was, did all that lay in her power to further her lord's wishes. She made a last careful review of her visiting-book before she closed it for the year, and many searchings of her memory before she left that to its summer repose. All whom they ought to be civil to, and had not, were bidden to this latest "at home;" although, after all, its society was anything but mixed. Lord Hestercombe was too scrupulous as to dropping acquaintanceships not to be cautious about forming them.

Hestercombe House stood in the centre of the Hestercombe City property—a vast mansion occupying the whole side of an ex-fashionable square to the north of Oxford Street. Glooming behind its lofty walls of brick, it looked like a Sicilian convent, toned down to London tints by a century and a half of London smoke. Now the huge iron portals were flung back, and a blaze of gas-lamps cast its light on the grim façade, looking like an ugly woman in diamonds, the more forbidding for its adventitious splendour. As is so often the case, you would have been much misled had you judged of what was within by the outward seeming; and after dark, when you shut out the view of the grim inclosures that caricatured gardens and shrubbery, the house was as cheerful as anything so spacious could be. In the times when it was built, there had been less reason for studying rigid economy of space, and to the Lord Rushbrook who reared it money had been of slight consequence. As with the interior of St. Peter's, you only became aware of the dimensions of the hall when you came to measure yourself against its columns. You might have driven waggons up the easy slope of the staircases, and turned them comfortably on the landings; and the vast approaches would have dwarfed to paltriness any meaner suite of apartments than those they led to.

No Rushbrook had ever been a miser; none had ever been more of a prodigal than the present heir-apparent of the house. Some had been *virtuosi* of unimpeachable taste; and others had followed, according to their lights, what had become a traditional fashion of the family. The result was an unostentatiously lavish display of art-treasures, that distracted the gaze and diverted the attention of appreciative guests, and a general air of unaffected magnificence that impressed you without oppressing. At the hospitalities of Hestercombe House there was seldom much overcrowding; and if fair guests did leave breadths of dresses behind as memorials of their visits, the fault was generally their own. Even when the rooms were full, as they were to-night, the company was not constrained to seethe and stagnate, but could exhilarate itself with the flash and sparkle of change and movement. Congenial spirits, although hampered with solid forms, could draw together as they pleased, could flirt in comfort without being conspicuous; and in search of beauty, love, or adventure, you could thread the groups at will, without the *arrière pensée* of their closing to cut off your retreat, like so much warm drift-ice.

At this gathering, as it chanced, we meet a good many of our friends.

Time had done its healing work with Hugh and Lord Hestercombe, and they stood once more on the old familiar terms. As Hugh had foreseen, the peer's first disgust in finding that his nephew had become a trader, had warmed into resentment on learning his nephew had persuaded his only son to follow the example. *Que diable* was the business of the heir of the Rushbrooks on board a galley like that? But he was not a man to bear malice, and had at bottom a strong sense of justice. As it became clear to him that the step Hugh had taken, so far from being ill-advised, was really the best considered he had ever made in his life, he began to forgive him. Moreover, he felt it quite out of the question letting any lasting cloud settle down between him and his son, and Rushbrook once restored to favour, reconciliation with Hugh followed as a matter of course. He compromised with his feelings by occasional flings at the business—flings which the younger men received with passive acquiescence, or turned off with a laugh. On the whole, after he had accustomed himself to the first unpleasantness, he was not sorry Rushbrook should pick up some ideas of business, while he was anything but blind to the respect with which the successful Governor began to be treated as an authority in financial questions by really influential men. Insensibly he came to take a pride in his scapegrace nephew, and to feel that good might grow out of evil, and he might live to do them credit yet.

"He has talent, that is certain. Every one calls him a clear-headed, ready speaker; he seems to twist the world round his fingers very much as he pleases; no man works harder, and yet he finds time somehow to spare for society. Why should he not turn to politics and make his mark in the country as he has in the City? With my interest and the name he is making for himself to start him, I really don't see why he should not begin at once, nor where he need stop—'Gad, he shall do it, he must."

Thus his lordship reasoned; but then he counted, in his enthusiasm, without his nephew's stubborn will and singleness of present purpose. Their many arguments ended much in the same way. Lord Hestercombe would be silenced only to return to the charge upon fresh provocation; but the intervals between his onslaughts grew longer as he became less hopeful of success. This especial evening, unexpected circumstances taking him by surprise, braced him to a fresh attempt on Hugh's ambition, and never did he come so near to having his way. When the gentlemen were leaving the dining-room, one of them whispered something in the ear of his host that made him linger behind for a *tête-à-tête*. The Duke of Dunstanburgh was a personage: a peer who, by virtue of his colossal fortune and family political traditions, had succeeded as of right to the great influence he exercised on the party then forming her Majesty's opposition, and who, had his energy been on a par with his talent, might have made himself autocratic in it. The Duke was a large landholder in South Wurzelshire, a district in which the Earl's properties and coal-mines gave him so large a stake and so legitimate an interest.

"Read that, Hestercombe," began his grace abruptly, handing his host a letter.

"Why, what the deuce?—impossible!—Crofton going to accept the Chiltern Hundreds, and writing on the subject to your grace of all men in the world! Why, he's scarcely had time to get warm in his seat, since he fought it so hard and bought it so dear. You must forgive me, Dunstanburgh, but really I hardly know how to believe this."

"That I can understand; but you may rely upon it it's true all the same. Thereby hangs a tale, and an explanation. Crofton, you know, is the most eccentric of men, and, in his own opinion, one of the cleverest. He is clever, but, as I need not tell you, he overrates himself, and, above all, overvalues his special gift for legislating. This session he has brought in a dozen or two of bills, and his name has never been out of the orders for the day. Most of his pets were smothered in their infancy, not one of them came to anything, and he accuses Ministers, to whom he gave a very independent support indeed, of having thrown him over. Of course he would not rat, but he was thoroughly disgusted with the House. He has honestly persuaded himself that the present Government are the bane of all enlightened lawgiving, and, of course, unworthy of all support. So he compromises with his conscience by letting me into the secret before his party. He's a connection of mine, you know. That's my theory, at least. He's just the man to argue himself into anything."

"I see he says he starts forthwith on a yachting voyage to the Malay Archipelago, leaving strict instructions that no sort of coercion is to be exercised on his tenantry."

"Yes. We know what that means. Well, with you and I pulling together, and first in the field, and the Crofton interest neutral at least, the seat is our own. They have no one in that side of the county to contest it, and by the time they fetch a man from somewhere else, they'll find they might just as well have spared themselves the trouble."

"That's true," responded Lord Hestercombe, meditatively, thinking what a rare opening this would have been for Hugh had he only been awakened to his true interests. But with the best will in the world, he could not persuade himself that Hugh would not refuse even this, and he felt that to name him uselessly would be tantamount to leaving the subsequent disposal of the seat to his noble friend. Lord Hestercombe, all law and statute to the contrary, was jealous of his election influence.

"Now," proceeded the Duke, "so sure am I that we shall have no difficulty in agreeing on our man, that, to tell the truth, I've already named him in confidence to Bletchington, whom I chanced to run up against this afternoon, and Bletchington pledged himself most cordially to give him his own support, and answered for his brother-in-law as well."

Lord Hestercombe raised his eyebrows utterly puzzled. If his grace

had acted without reference to him and so coolly, he was the last man to avow it.

The Duke remarked it all, smiled, and went on.

"The truth is, Hestercombe, before I had well read Crofton's letter, I jumped to the conclusion we could find no better member than your nephew. Mr. Childersleigh ought to be with us—we want men of position from the City. Gentlemen, I mean, who can speak and think too. Not the easy-going jackasses who, dropping their panniers of gold in the boroughs, come and prick their long ears in St. Stephen's, or, worse still, take to braying there. Mr. Childersleigh would do us service and credit both, or I'm much mistaken. Caldcott holds a number of shares in that Company of his, and swears by him as a future Chancellor of the Exchequer. So the seat is his; but the earlier he comes into the field after it the less trouble we shall have. If I could see him, or have his answer at once, it would be all the better. Nothing like doing things regularly, but we must not let the grass grow under our feet."

Seldom had Lord Hestercombe been plunged in a more profound quandary. When his grace had done speaking he was so deep in thought that he forgot to thank him. The Duke had been born and bred to the faith that wealth was a matter of course, a means but never an end. Holding political life to be the natural sphere for a man of talents' superfluous energy, he had assumed Childersleigh's assent, and would be very slow to understand his hesitation. Lord Hestercombe was grieved to think his nephew might injure himself in the opinion of a politician so influential, and would have yielded to the sore temptation of accepting warmly in his name, had he not felt that to do it would be to ring the death-knell of his wishes. But the silence was becoming embarrassing, and candour seemed the only way out of the dilemma. A proposal so flattering, made by a statesman with whom the gift of judging other men was supposed a second nature, might perhaps sway his nephew where nothing else would. So far his lordship was right. A message brought Hugh downstairs incontinent, and the Duke, gracefully preluding with some remarks that meant far more from him than another man, curtly explained the circumstances, and repeated the proposal that showed his speech had been no empty compliment.

Hugh was flattered and troubled too. Since he began to take pleasure in action, the love of work had grown with its indulgence, and he felt he could never again be happy as an idle man. Hard as he toiled in his money-getting, he acknowledged there was something unsatisfying and ignoble in the ambition that limited itself to a race where the prizes were to the luckiest. Without his uncle's promptings, he had dreamed dreams, and no vague ones either, of a future to which the fortune he was striving for should only be a stepping-stone. Fortunate as he had been, in the very ease with which he had won success, he despised its fruits, and began to long for other struggles that would really task his latent powers. But then, above all, he prided himself on the steadfastness of purpose with

which he was following his present aim. It had become matter of vanity with him that nothing should turn him out of his way until Miss Childersleigh's money was fairly won or lost.

It had cost him slight effort to put off Lord Hestercombe, because he knew he risked so little by letting the fruit hang that his lordship dangled before his eyes. Now the case was different, and when his grace of Dunstanburgh broached his unexpected proposal, he felt he was caught in the turn of a tide that might float him to fame or sweep him away from it. The Duke's countenance counted for much to any aspirant of his party, no matter how highly placed. The very semblance of undervaluing it might gravely cripple him. It clashed with all his later training wilfully to throw away a splendid chance, and in spite of him his chest heaved and his breath came short, as the bold idea flashed across his brain—might not he really be strong enough for one and the other?—well placed as he was, might he not persevere in his match with time, and even help himself to win it by rushing in at this new opening?

The Duke looked on complacently at his visible agitation and thought none the worse of his intended recruit for these signs of sensibility. Lord Hestercombe was surprised and hopeful. When Hugh showed it, he must be moved indeed.

"I sincerely congratulate you, Mr. Childersleigh. You will come very easily by a very comfortable seat. You have made your mark I understand as a speaker elsewhere, and a man who at once takes high rank in the City and sits for a great county interest, speaks in the House, as I need hardly tell you, with very enviable weight. If we are in power again next session—and I for one do not see why we should not be—we shall have the Member for South Wurzelshire moving her Majesty's speech. Eh, Hestercombe?"

Lord Hestercombe, while listening to his friend, had kept his eye on his nephew, and his face had gradually clouded as he saw settling down on Hugh's features the look of melancholy determination he had come to know so well. The sudden shock of the offer might have shaken his resolutions for the moment, but, as he saw, they were already screwing themselves back fast in the old quarter. When Hugh did answer, he was quite himself again to all outward seeming.

"I need scarcely say how very grateful I feel to your grace."

His grace made a deprecatory motion of his hand.

"I should be in everyway unworthy of your flattering kindness, were I to meet it with anything but the most outspoken frankness. And the simple truth is, I am so flattered by your thinking of me in the circumstances, by your making me the offer at all, to say nothing of the terms in which you have been good enough to make it, that I have absolutely no choice but to refuse."

"Mr. Childersleigh!" ejaculated his grace, bending his brow slightly and doubting if he heard aright.

"Pray do not misunderstand me or suspect me of trifling with words, or indulging a levity that would be most unbecoming in any case, especially

so now. I say nothing but the plain truth; and doing so, were it a matter of any consequence to your grace, I only show the very high value I set on the opinion you have been pleased to form of me."

"Well, sir?" threw in the Duke, relaxing a little and rather curious.

"My uncle may testify how often we have discussed this question of my entering on public life. Had I been his son he could not have pressed his assistance more warmly upon me. If I have always turned a deaf ear to his offers, he knows it was not because my heart did not go along with them. He can tell you I have always begged him to consider it an affair deferred, not declined."

Coming to his nephew's assistance, Lord Hestercombe nodded slightly in the affirmative.

"I do not know," Hugh continued, "whether I may prove to have any vocation for public life; but assuredly I feel so strong an inclination for it, that I am loath to peril by precipitation what chances I may have."

"Pardon me, Mr. Childersleigh," interposed the Duke, with just the faintest intonation of a sneer, "but it seems to me any such hesitation is uncalled for. You cannot fairly tax yourself with precipitation."

"Not so far as my years go, certainly," returned Hugh, flushing a little; "but you misunderstand me. The simple fact is, I have set myself, as my uncle knows, a certain task to be performed in the next two years; hard enough it is in any case, even abandoning to it all my time and all my thought. If ever I enter Parliament it must be with enough of the one and the other at my command to do credit to those who interest themselves in me; and if I have somewhat exalted ideas about the paramount claims of politics on the man who embraces them, I am sure I need not fear the censure of the Duke of Dunstanburgh."

"Certainly not, Mr. Childersleigh; but I need scarcely remind you how many business men occupy seats in the House."

"The difference is, their fortunes are made while mine is making; nor did your grace, if I understood you aright, allude to them a minute ago in terms they need have much reason to be proud of."

The Duke received the home-thrust with a smile; and breaking ground, appealed again to Mr. Childersleigh's ambition with a patience that showed the importance he attached to awakening it. But he had learned to read character, and saw that for the moment all he might urge would go for nothing. The best thing to be done was to take it for granted that Hugh's present decision was not final; to insist on his taking time for reflection, and to trust to regrets and second thoughts to sap his resolutions. Where everything was so urgent, the very giving him the night was a flattering earnest of the distinction that might await him; and it was just possible he might be persuaded not to defer on a doubtful chance the brilliant certainty most ambitious men must have jumped at. Hugh would have had it taken for granted the question was disposed of, but on that point the Duke was firm, and said as he shook him warmly by the hand,—

"No, no, Mr. Childersleigh, take an older man's advice and always

sleep when you can on an important resolution. I, for one, have often found the night bring me counsel. I wish you good-evening, but I shall be glad to hear from you early to-morrow. Now, Hestercombe, I must run away. I made my excuses to Lady Hestercombe already."

The Duke did run away, if the dignified pace he was pleased to describe as running could so be called. While Lord Hestercombe drew his nephew out of the hall, where there was already a bustle of coming guests, the appealing look he addressed to Hugh was really touching from a man like him.

"You will think twice, Hugh, will you not, before refusing this offer Dunstanburgh makes us? It means a very great deal from him, let me tell you."

Hugh shook his head regretfully.

"So much I can easily promise you, but then I've thought it over so often before. If anything could have shaken me, be sure your wishes would have done it long ago."

"But this chance——"

"Tempted me, I own, but only for a moment. If I snatched it, tempting as it seems, it would be the dog in the fable over again—the sacrifice of the substance to the shadow."

"No shadow, Hugh, no shadow."

"At least, the other's a substance, and it would be a folly to risk losing it; and lose it I should to a certainty: man's capacity is limited, and I don't overrate mine. I've been face to face with poverty, and it fairly frightened me. I've no philosophy, as I found, not a shred of it. You would fill your seat for Wurzelshire with a half-hearted politician, his heart hovering over the grave of his treasure, and his thoughts wandering away in the City. In a year I should be a failure, a disappointed man, remorseful at having laid the axe to my own prosperity. It's best waiting, after all, and believe me, I should do much better later were I even brought down to sitting for a metropolitan burgh or an Irish one. I've been perfectly candid, and I see you own the force of what I say. In prudence you could scarcely urge me, even as seats sell now, to give some hundred thousands for mine. I know I may trust your goodness to smoothe matters over with the Duke, and if any one can do it you can, for no man can appreciate a common-sense view of things better than he, when brought home to him by a man like you."

"Well, well, Hugh, we shall see about all that later, but think it over—think it over," rejoined Lord Hestercombe, still clinging to hopes in the face of conviction: perhaps, in his suppressed admiration of his nephew's successful energy, trusting that in very prudence he might come to a decision that would be rash in another man. "In the meantime we'll go upstairs."

A SIGH OF HORROR WAS UTTERED IN THE VERANDAH.

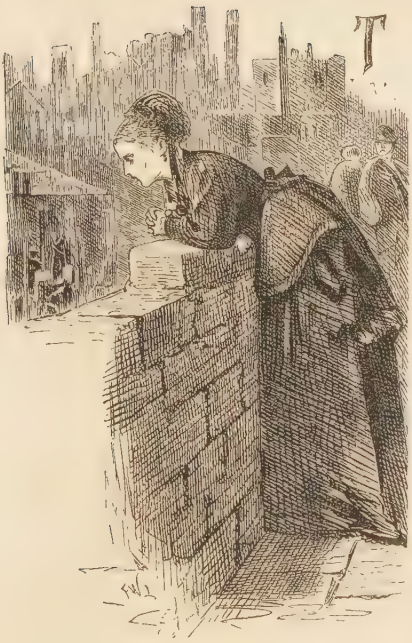
THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MARCH, 1870.

Put Yourself in His Place.

CHAPTER XXXIII.



THAT was Grace Carden's first anonymous letter. Its contents curdled her veins with poison. The poor girl sat pale and benumbed, turning the letter in her hand, and reading the fatal words over and over again.

There was a time when she would have entirely disbelieved this slander; but now she remembered, with dismay, how many things had combined to attach Henry to Jael Dence. And then the letter stated such hard facts; facts unknown to her, but advanced positively.

But what terrified her most was that Henry had so lately told her Jael Dence loved him best.

Yet her tossed and tortured mind laid hold of this comfort, that not the man only, but the woman too, were loyal, faithful spirits. Could they both have changed? Appearances are deceitful, and might have deceived this anonymous writer.

After hours of mere suffering, she began to ask herself what she should do?

Her first feminine impulse was to try and find out the truth without Henry's aid.

But, no; on second thoughts she would be open and loyal, show Henry the letter, and ask him to tell her how much truth, if any, there was in it.

The agony she endured was a lesson to her. Now she knew what jealousy was; and saw at once she could not endure its torments. She thought to herself he was quite right to make her dismiss Mr. Coventry, and he must dismiss Jael: she should insist on it.

This resolution formed, she lived on thorns, awaiting Henry Little's next visit.

He came next day, but she was out.

She asked the servant if he had said anything.

The servant said, "He seemed a good deal put out at first, Miss, but afterwards he said, 'No, it was all for the best.'"

This was another blow. Grace connected these words of Henry in some mysterious way with the anonymous letter, and spent the night crying: but, in the morning, being a brave high-spirited girl, she resolved to take a direct course; she would go down to the works, and request an explanation on the premises. She would see the room where Henry was said to pass so many hours with Jael, and she would show him that the man she loved, and lived for, must place himself above suspicion, or lose her for ever. "And if he quarrels with me for that," she thought, "why, I can die." She actually carried out her resolution, and went early next morning to the works, to demand an explanation. She took the letter with her. As she went along she discussed in her own mind how she should proceed, and at last she resolved to just hand him the letter and fix her eye on him. His face would tell her the truth.

She drove up to the great gate; there were a good many people about, talking, in excited groups.

The porter came out to her. She said she wished to see Mr. Little.

The porter stared: the people within hearing left off talking, and stared, too, at her, and then at one another.

At last the porter found his voice. "Mr. Little! why, we can't find him anywhere, dead or alive."

Just then, Ransome came out, and, seeing Miss Carden, gave a start, and looked much concerned.

Grace surprised this look, and her own face began to fill with surprise, and then with alarm. "Not to be found!" she faltered.

She did not know Mr. Ransome, but he knew her; and he came to the carriage-window, and said, in a low voice, "Miss Carden, I am the chief constable. I would advise you to return home. The fact is, there has been an explosion here, and a young woman nearly killed."

"Poor creature! But Mr. Little! Oh, sir! Oh, sir!"

"We can't find him," said Ransome, solemnly: "and we fear—we sadly fear——"

Grace uttered a low cry, and then sat trembling.

Ransome tried to console her; said it was just possible he might have not slept in the works.

The porter shook his head.

Grace sprang from the carriage. "Show me the place," said she, hoarsely.

Ransome demurred. "It is an ugly sight for any one to see."

"Who has a better right to see it than I? I shall find him, if he is there. Give me your arm: I have heard him speak of you."

Then Ransome yielded reluctantly, and took her to the place.

He showed her Henry's room, all rent and mutilated.

She shuddered, and, covering her face with her hands, leaned half fainting against her conductor: but soon she shook this off, and became inspired with strange energy, though her face was like marble.

She drew him, indeed almost dragged him, hither and thither, questioning him, and listening to everybody's conjectures; for there were loud groups here of work-people and townspeople.

Some thought he was buried under the great chimney in the river, others intimated plainly their fear that he was blown to atoms.

At each suggestion Grace Carden's whole body winced and quivered, as if the words were sword-cuts; but she would not be persuaded to retire. "No, no," she cried, "amongst so many, some one will guess right. I'll hear all they think, if I die on the spot: die! What is life to me now? Ah! what is that woman saying?" And she hurried Ransome towards a work-woman who was haranguing several of her comrades.

The woman saw Ransome coming towards her with a strange lady. "Ah!" said she, "here's the constable. Mr. Ransome, will ye tell me where you found the lass, yesternight?"

"She was lying on that heap of bricks: I marked the place with two pieces of chalk; ay, here they are; her head lay here, and her feet here."

"Well then," said the woman, "he will not be far from that place. You clear away those bricks and rubbish, and you will find him underneath. She was his sweetheart, that is well known here; and he was safe to be beside her, when the place was blown up."

"No such thing," said Ransome, angrily, and casting a side-look at Grace. "She lay on the second floor, and Mr. Little on the first floor."

"Thou simple body," said the woman. "What's a stair to a young man, when a bonny lass lies awaiting him, and not a soul about? They were a deal too close together all day, to be distant at night."

A murmur of assent burst at once from all the women.

Grace's body winced and quivered, but her marble face never stirred, nor did her lips utter a sound.

"Come away from their scandalous tongues," said Ransome, eagerly.

"No," said Grace; and such a "No." It was like a statue uttering a chip of its own marble.

Then she stood quivering a moment: then, leaving Ransome's arm, she darted up to the place where Jael Dence had been found.

She stood, like a bird, on the broken masonry, and opened her beautiful eyes in a strange way, and demanded of all her senses whether the body of him she loved lay beneath her feet.

After a minute, during which every eye was riveted on her, she said, "I don't believe it; I don't feel him near me. But I will know."

She took out her purse, full of gold, and held it up to the women. "This for you, if you will help me." Then, kneeling down, she began to tear up the bricks and throw them, one after another, as far as her strength permitted. The effect on the work-women was electrical: they swarmed on the broken masonry, and began to clear it away brick by brick. They worked with sympathetic fury, led by this fair creature, whose white hands were soon soiled and bloody, but never tired. In less than an hour they had cleared away several waggon-loads of débris.

The body of Henry Little was not there.

Grace gave her purse to the women, and leaned heavily on Mr. Ransome's arm again. He supported her out of the works.

As soon as they were alone, she said, "Is Jael Dence alive or dead?"

"She was alive half an hour ago."

"Where is she?"

"At the hospital."

"Take me to the hospital."

He took her to the hospital, and soon they stood beside a clean little bed, in which lay the white, but still comely face, of Jael Dence: her luxuriant hair was cut close, and her head bandaged; but for her majestic form she looked a fair, dying boy.

"Stand back," said Grace, "and let me speak to her." Then she leaned over Jael, where she lay.

Gentle women are not all gentleness. Watch them, especially in contact with their own sex, and you shall see now and then a trait of the wild animal. Grace Carden at this moment was anything but dove-like: it was more like a falcon the way she clutched the bed-clothes, and towered over that prostrate figure, and then, descending slowly nearer and nearer, plunged her eyes into those fixed and staring orbs of Jael Dence.

So she remained riveted. Had Jael been conscious, and culpable, nothing could have escaped a scrutiny so penetrating.

Even unconscious as she was, Jael's brain and body began to show some signs they were not quite impervious to the strange magnetic power, which besieged them so closely. When Grace's eyes had been close to hers about a minute, Jael Dence moved her head slightly to the left, as if those eyes scorched her.

But Grace moved her own head to the right, rapid as a snake, and fixed her again directly.

Jael Dence's bosom gave a heave.

"Where—is—Henry Little?" said Grace, still holding her tight by

the eye, and speaking very slowly, and in such a tone, low, but solemn and commanding; a tone that compelled reply.

"Where—is—Henry Little?"

When this was so repeated, Jael moved a little, and her lips began to quiver.

"Where—is—Henry Little?"

Jael's lips opened feebly, and some inarticulate sounds issued from them.

"Where—is—Henry Little?"

Jael Dence, though unconscious, writhed and moaned so, that the head nurse interfered, and said she could not have the patient tormented.

Ransome waved her aside, but taking Grace Carden's hand drew her gently away.

She made no positive resistance; but, while her body yielded and retired, her eye remained riveted on Jael Dence, and her hand clutched the air, like a hawk's talons, unwilling to lose her prey, and then she turned so weak, Ransome had to support her to her carriage.

As Grace's head sunk on Ransome's shoulder, Jael Dence's eyes closed for the first time.

As Ransome was lifting Grace Carden into the carriage, she said, in a sort of sleepy voice, "Is there no way out of these works, but one?"

"Not that I know of; but I will go at once and see. Shall he drive you home?"

"Yes. No: to Doctor Amboyne."

Doctor Amboyne was gone to Woodbine Villa.

She waited in his study, moving about the room all the time, with her face of marble, and her poor restless hands.

At last the Doctor returned: they told him, at the door, Miss Carden was there: he came in to her with both hands extended, and his face working with emotion.

She fell sobbing into his arms; sobbing, but not a tear.

"Is there any hope?"

"I have one. May he not have left the country, in a fit of despair? He often threatened. He talked of going to the United States."

"So he did. Ah, he called on me yesterday afternoon. Might not that have been to bid me good-by?"

She looked so imploringly in Doctor Amboyne's face, that he assented, though full of doubt.

And now there was a ring at the bell, and Mr. Ransome came to say there was a little postern gate, by which Mr. Little might possibly have gone out, and the porter not seen him; and, what was more, this gate, by all accounts, had been recently opened: it was closed before Bolt and Little took the premises.

Mr. Ransome added that he should now make it his business to learn, if possible, whether it had been opened by Mr. Little's orders.

Grace thanked him earnestly, and looked hopeful; so did Doctor Amboyne.

"But, Doctor!" said Grace, "if he has gone away at all, he must have told somebody. Even if there was nobody he loved, he would tell—ah! Mr. Bolt!!"

"You are right. Let us go to him at once."

They found Mr. Bolt in quite a different frame of mind from their own; he was breathing vengeance. However, he showed some feeling for Grace, and told the Doctor plainly he feared the worst. Little had been down-hearted for some time, and, at last, he (Bolt) had lost patience with him, and had proposed to him to take an annual payment of nine hundred pounds instead of a share, and leave the concern. Little had asked two days to consider this proposal. "Now," argued Bolt, "if he meant to leave England, he could not do better than take my offer: and he would have taken it, before he left. He would have called, or else sent me a letter. But no: not a word! It's a bad job: I'm fond of money, but I'd give a few thousands to see him alive again. But I don't think I ever shall. There are five hundred thousand bricks of ours in that river, and a foot and a half of mud."

While they were both shuddering at this dark allusion, he went off into idle threats, and Grace left him, sick and cold, and clinging to Doctor Amboyne like a drowning woman.

"Have courage," said Doctor Amboyne. "There is one chance left us. His mother! I will telegraph to Aberystwith."

They drove together to the telegraph office, and sent a telegram. The Doctor would not consent to frighten Mrs. Little to death. He simply asked whether her son had just visited or written to her. The answer was paid for; but four hours elapsed, and no answer came.

Then Grace implored the Doctor to go with her to Aberystwith. He looked grave, and said she was undertaking too much. She replied, almost fiercely, that she must do all that could be done, or she should go mad.

"But your father, my dear!"

"He is in London. I will tell him all when he returns. He would let me go anywhere with you. I must go; I will!"

At four o'clock they were in the train. They spoke to each other but little on the way: their hearts were too full of dire forebodings, to talk about nothings. But, when they were in the fly at Aberystwith, going from the station to Mrs. Little's lodgings, Grace laid her head on her friend's shoulder and said, "Oh, Doctor, it has come to this—I hope he loved his mother better than me." Then came a flood of tears, the first.

They went to Mrs. Little's lodgings. The landlady had retired to bed, and, on hearing their errand, told them, out of the second-floor window, that Mrs. Little had left her some days ago, and gone to a neighbouring village for change of air.

Grace and Doctor Amboyne drove next morning to that village, and

soon learned where Mrs. Little was. Doctor Amboyne left Grace at the inn, for he knew the sight of her would at once alarm Mrs. Little; and, in a matter so uncertain as this, he thought the greatest caution necessary. Grace waited for him at the inn in an agony of suspense. She watched at the window for him, and at last she saw him coming towards her. His head was down, and she could not read his face, or she could have told in a moment whether he brought good news or bad.

She waited for him erect but trembling. He opened the door and stood before her pale and agitated; so pale and agitated she had never seen him before.

He faltered out: "She knows nothing. She must know nothing. She is too ill and weak, and, indeed, in such a condition, that to tell her the fatal news would probably have killed her on the spot. All I dared do was to ask her with assumed indifference if she had heard from Henry lately. No, Grace, not for these three days."

He sat down and groaned aloud.

"You love the son," said he; "but I love the mother: loved her years before you were born."

At this unexpected revelation Grace Carden kissed him, and wept on his shoulder. Then they went sadly home again.

Doctor Amboyne now gave up all hopes of Henry, and his anxiety was concentrated on Mrs. Little. How on earth was he to save her from a shock likely to prove fatal in her weak condition? To bring her to Hillsborough in her present state would be fatal. He was compelled to leave her in Wales, and that looked so like abandoning her. He suffered torture, the torture that only noble minds can know. At midnight, as he lay in bed, and revolved in his mind all the difficulties and perils of this pitiable situation, an idea struck him. He would try and persuade Mrs. Little to marry him. Should she consent, he could then take her on a wedding-tour, and that tour he could easily extend from place to place, putting off the evil time until, strong in health and conjugal affection, she might be able to endure the terrible, the inevitable blow. The very next morning he wrote her an eloquent letter; he told her that Henry had gone suddenly off to Australia to sell his patents; that almost his last word had been, "My mother! I leave her to you." This, said the Doctor, is a sacred commission: and how can I execute it? I cannot invite you to Hillsborough, for the air is fatal to you. Think of your half-promise, and my many years of devotion, and give me the right to carry out your son's wishes to the full.

Mrs. Little replied to this letter, and the result of the correspondence was this: she said she would marry him if she could recover her health: but *that* she feared she never should, until she was reconciled to her brother.

Meantime, Grace Carden fell into a strange state: fits of feverish

energy; fits of death-like stupor. She could do nothing, yet it maddened her to be idle. With Bolt's permission she set workmen to remove all the remains of the chimney that could be got at: the water was high just then: she had a barge and workmen, and often watched them, and urged them by her presence. Not that she ever spoke; but she hovered about with her marble face and staring eyes; and the sight of her touched their hearts and spurred them to exertion.

Sometimes she used to stand on a heap of bricks hard by, and peer, with dilated eyes, into the dark stream, and watch each bucket, or basket, as it came up with bricks, and rubbish, and mud, from the bottom.

At other times she would stand on the bridge, and lean over the battlements so far, as if she would fly down and search for her dead lover.

One day as she hung thus, glaring into the water, she heard a deep sigh. She looked up, and there was a face almost as pale as her own, and even more haggard, looking at her with a strange mixture of pain and pity. This ghastly spectator of her agony was himself a miserable man. It was Frederick Coventry. His crime had brought him no happiness, no hope of happiness.

At sight of him, Grace Carden groaned, and covered her face with her hands.

Coventry drew back dismayed. His guilty conscience misinterpreted this.

"You can forgive us now," said Grace, with a deep sob: then turned away with sullen listlessness, and continued her sad scrutiny.

Coventry loved her, after his fashion, and her mute but eloquent misery moved him.

He drew nearer to her, and said softly, "Do not look so: I can't bear it. He is not there."

"Ah! How do you know?

Coventry was silent for a moment, and seemed uneasy: but, at last, he replied thus:—"There were two explosions. The chimney fell into the river a moment before the explosion that blew up the works. So how can he be buried under the ruins of the chimney? I know this from a workman who was standing on the bridge when the explosions took place."

"Bless the tongue that tells me that. Oh, how much wiser you are than the rest of us! Mr. Coventry, pity and forgive a poor girl who has used you ill. Tell me—tell me—what can have become of him?"

Coventry was much agitated, and could not speak for some time, and, when he did, it was in a faint voice as of one exhausted by a mental struggle. "Would you rather he was—dead—or—false?"

"Oh, false—a thousand times—prove to me he is not dead, but only false to his poor Grace, and I will bless you on my knees."

Coventry's eye flashed. "Well, then, he was the lover of Jael Dence, the girl who fought for him, and shed her blood for him, and saved his life. The connection was open and notorious."

Grace was silent.

"Many a man has fled from two women, who could have been happy with either of them. I believe that this man found himself unable to play the double game any longer, and that he has fled the country——"

"I pray God it may be so," sobbed Grace.

"—Through remorse, or from dread of exposure. Have patience. Do not kill yourself, and break all our hearts. Take my word for it, you will hear from him in a few days, and he will give you reasons for his strange disappearance,—excellent, business-like reasons, but not the true ones: there will not be a word about Jael Dence." This last with a sneer.

Grace turned on him with eyes that literally gleamed: "You hated him living, you slander him dead. Falsehood was not in him: his affection for Jael Dence was no secret. I knew it, and approved it. It was as pure as heaven. His poor mutilated body will soon contradict these vile calumnies. I hate you! I hate you!"

Coventry drew back at first from this burst of ire; but soon he met her glance with one of fiendish bitterness. "You hate me for pitying you, and saying that man is not dead. Well, have your own way, then; he is not false, but dead."

He turned on his heel, and went away.

As for Mr. Carden, he declined to admit that Little was dead, and said his conduct was unpardonable, and, indeed, so nearly resembled madness, that, considering the young man's father had committed suicide, he was determined never to admit him into his house again, at all events as a suitor to Grace.

Mr. Coventry had now taken spacious apartments, and furnished them. He resumed his visits to the club. Mr. Carden met him there, and spoke more confidentially to him than he did to his daughter, and admitted he had grave doubts, but said he was a director of the Gosshawk, and would never, either in public or private, allow that Little was dead, unless his body should be found, and properly identified.

All this time there was a hot discussion in the journals; and the Saw-grinders' Union repudiated the outrage with horror, and offered a considerable reward.

Outsiders were taken in by this; but not a single manufacturer or workman.

Mr. Holdfast denounced it as a Trade outrage; and Ransome groped the town for evidence.

The latter, however, was rather puzzled one day by an anonymous letter telling him he was all on the wrong tack; it was not a Trade job, but contrived by a gentleman for his private ends. Advantage had been

taken of Little being wrong with the Trade; "but," said the letter, "you should look to the head for the motive, not to the hands. One or two saw them together a good many times before the deed was done, and the Swell was seen on the very bridge when the explosion took place."

This set Ransome thinking very seriously and comparing notes.

Week after week went by and left the mystery unsolved.

Mr. Coventry saw Mr. Carden nearly every day, and asked him was there no news of Little? The answer was always in the negative, and this surprised Coventry more and more.

When a whole month had elapsed, even he began to fancy strange things, and to nurse wild projects that had never entered his head before. He studied books of medical jurisprudence, and made all manner of experiments. He resumed his intimacy with Cole, and they were often closeted together.

Five weeks had elapsed, and Grace Carden had lost all her feverish energy, and remained passive, lethargic, fearing everything, hoping nothing, but quivering all day with expectation of the next blow; for what had she left to expect now but sorrow in some form or other?

She often wished to visit Jael Dence again at the hospital; but, for some time, an invincible repugnance withheld her.

She asked Doctor Amboyne to go instead, and question the unhappy girl.

Doctor Amboyne did so; but Jael was now in a half-stupid condition, and her poor brain not clear enough to remember what she was wanted to remember. Her memory was full of gaps, and, unluckily, one of these gaps embraced the whole period between her battle with Hill and the present time.

At last Grace was irritated, and blamed the Doctor for his failure. She reminded him she had herself magnetized Jael, and had almost made her speak. She resolved to go to the hospital herself. "I'll make her tell me one thing," said she, "though I tear her heart out, and my own too."

She dressed plainly, and walked rapidly down towards the hospital. There were two ways to it, but she chose the one that was sure to give her pain. She could not help it; her very feet dragged her to that fatal spot.

When she drew near the fatal bridge, she observed a number of persons collected on it, looking down in the river at some distance.

At the same time people began to hurry past her, making for the bridge.

She asked one of them what it was.

"Summut in the river," was the reply, but in a tone so full of meaning, that, at these simple words, she ran forward, though her knees almost gave way under her.

The bridge was not so crowded yet, but that she contrived to push in between two women, and look.

All the people were speaking in low murmurs. The hot weather had dried the river up to a stream in the middle, and, in mid-stream, about fifty yards from the foot of the bridge, was a pile of broken masonry, which had once been the upper part of Bolt and Little's chimney. It had fallen into water twelve feet deep; but now the water was not above five feet, and a portion of the broken bricks and tiles were visible, some just above, some just under the water.

At one side of this wreck jutted out the object on which all eyes were now fastened. At first sight, it looked a crooked log of wood, sticking out from among the bricks. Thousands, indeed, had passed the bridge, and noticed nothing particular about it; but one, more observant or less hurried, had peered, and then pointed, and collected the crowd.

It needed but a second look to show that this was not a log of wood, but the sleeve of a man's coat. A closer inspection revealed that the sleeve was not empty.

There was an arm inside that sleeve, and a little more under the water one could see distinctly a hand white and sodden by the water.

The dark stream just rippled over this hand, half veiling it at times, though never hiding it.

"The body will be jammed among the bricks," said a bystander; and all assented with awe.

"Eh! to think of its sticking out an arm like that!" said a young girl.

"Dead folk have done more than that, sooner than want Christian burial," replied an old woman.

"I warrant ye they have. I can't look at it."

"Is it cloth, or what?" inquired another.

"It's a kind of Tweed, I think."

"What's that glittering on its finger?"

"It's a ring,—a gold ring."

At this last revelation there was a fearful scream, and Grace Carden fell senseless on the pavement.

A gentleman, who had been hanging about and listening to the comments, now darted forward, with a face almost as white as her own, and raised her up, and implored the people to get her a carriage.

It was Mr. Coventry. Little had he counted on this meeting. Horror-stricken, he conveyed the insensible girl to her father's house.

He handed her over to the women, and fled; and the women brought her round; but she had scarcely recovered her senses, when she uttered another piercing scream, and swooned again.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Coventry passed a night of agony and remorse. He got up broken and despondent, and went straight to Woodbine Villa, to do a good action.

He inquired for Miss Carden. They told him she was very ill. He expressed an earnest wish to see her. The servants told him that was impossible. Nobody was allowed to see her but Doctor Amboyne. He went, next day, to Doctor Amboyne, and the Doctor told him that Miss Carden was dangerously ill. Brain fever appeared inevitable.

"But, sir," said Coventry, eagerly, "if one could prove to her that those were not the remains of Henry Little?"

"How could you prove that? Besides, it would be no use now. She is delirious. Even should she live, I should forbid the subject for many a day. Indeed, none but the man himself could make her believe those remains are not his; and even he could not save her now. If he stood by her bedside, she would not know him."

The Doctor's lip trembled a little, and his words were so grave and solemn that they struck to the miserable man's marrow. He staggered away, like a drunken man, to his lodgings, and there flung himself on the floor, and grovelled in an agony of terror and remorse.

CHAPTER XXXV.

One day it occurred to Raby he could play the misanthrope just as well at home as abroad, so he returned home.

He found old Dence dead and buried, and Patty Dence gone to Australia with her husband.

He heard Jael was in the hospital. He called at Woodbine Villa, and they told him Grace was lying between life and death.

He called on Doctor Amboyne, and found him as sad as he used to be gay. The Doctor told him all, and even took him to the Town Hall, and showed him an arm and part of the trunk of a man preserved in spirits, and a piece of Tweed cloth, and a plain gold ring.

"There," said he, "is all that remains to us of your nephew, and my friend. Genius, beauty, courage—all come to this!" He could say no more.

The tears filled Raby's eyes, and all his bitterness melted away. With respect to his sister, he said he was quite willing to be reconciled, and even to own himself in the wrong, if Dr. Amboyne, on reading the correspondence, should think so. Dr. Amboyne said he would come to Raby Hall for that purpose. He communicated this at once to Mrs. Little.

Grace had a favourable crisis, and in a few days more she was out of danger, but in a deplorable state of weakness. Doctor Amboyne ordered

her to the sea-side. A carriage was prepared expressly for her, and her father took her there.

Woodbine Villa was put up to let furnished, and it was taken by—Mr. Coventry.

Jael Dence began to recover strength rapidly, but she wore at times a confused look. The very day Grace left for Eastbank, she was discharged as cured, and left the hospital. This was in the morning.

In the afternoon Dr. Amboyne, being now relieved of his anxiety as to Grace, remembered he had not been to see this poor girl for some time; so he went to the hospital.

When he heard she was discharged, he felt annoyed with himself for not having paid her closer attention. And, besides, Grace had repeatedly told him Jael Dence could make a revelation if she chose. And now, occupied with Grace herself, he had neglected her wishes.

"Where is she gone? do you know?"

One of the nurses said she was gone home.

Another said the patient had told her she should go down to the works first.

"And that is the very last place you should have let her go to," said the Doctor. "A fine shock the poor creature will get there. You want her back here again, I suppose!" He felt uneasy, and drove down to the works. There he made some inquiries among the women, and elicited that Jael Dence had turned faint at sight of the place, and they had shown her, at her request, where she had been picked up, and had told her about the discovery of Little's remains, and she had persuaded a little girl to go to the Town Hall with her.

"Oh, the tongue! the tongue!" groaned Amboyne.

He asked to see the little girl, and she came forward of her own accord, and told him she had gone to the Town Hall with the lass, but" (regretfully) "that the man would not show them it without an order from the Mayor." "*It!*"

Doctor Amboyne said he was very glad that common sense had not quite deserted the earth. "And where did you go next?"

"I came back here."

"So I see; but the lass?"

"She said she should go home. 'My dear,' says she, 'there's nobody left me here; I'll go and die among my own folk.' That was her word."

"Poor thing! poor thing! Why——"

He stopped short, for that moment he remembered Raby had said old Dence was dead, and Patty gone to Australia. If so, here was another blow in store for poor Jael, and she weakened by a long illness.

He instantly resolved to drive after her, and see whether she was really in a fit state to encounter so many terrible shocks. If not, he should take her back to the infirmary, or into his own house; for he had a great respect for her, and indeed for all her family.

He drove fast, but he could see nothing of her on the road. So then he went on to Cairnhope.

He stopped at the farmhouse. It was sadly deteriorated in appearance. Inside he found only an old carter, and his daughter. The place was in their charge.

The old man told him apathetically Jael had come home two hours ago, and asked for her father and Patty, and they had told her the old farmer was dead and buried, and Patty gone to foreign parts.

"What, you blurted it out like that! You couldn't put yourself in that poor creature's place, and think what a blow it would be? How, in heaven's name, did she take it?"

"Well, sir, she stared a bit, and looked stupid-like; and then she sat down. She sat crowded altogether like, in yon corner, best part of an hour: and then she got up and said she must go and see his grave."

"You hadn't the sense to make her eat, of course?"

"My girl here set meat afore her; but she couldn't taste it."

Doctor Amboyne drove to Raby Hall and told Raby. Raby said he would have Jael up to the hall. It would be a better place for her now, than the farm. He ordered a room to be got ready for her, and a large fire lighted, and at the same time ordered the best bedroom for Doctor Amboyne. "You must dine and sleep here," said he, "and talk of old times."

Doctor Amboyne thanked him—it was dusk by this time—and was soon seated at that hospitable table, with a huge wood-fire blazing genially.

Meantime, Jael Dence sat crouched upon her father's grave, stupefied with grief. When she had crouched there a long time, she got up, and muttered, "Dead and gone, dead and gone." Then she crept up to the old church, and sat down in the porch, benumbed with grief, and still a little confused in her poor head.

She sat there for nearly two hours, and then she got up, and muttered, "Dead and gone,—he is dead and gone," and wandered on the hill desolate.

Her feet wandered, her brain wandered. She found herself, at last, in a place she recognized. It was Squire Raby's lawn. The moon had just risen, and shone on the turf, and on the little river that went curling round with here and there a deep pool.

She crept nearer, and saw the great bay-window, and a blaze of light behind it.

There she had sung the great Noel with her father; and now he was dead and gone.

There she had been with Henry Little, and seen him recognize his mother's picture; and now he was dead and gone. She had saved his life in vain; he was dead and gone. Everybody was dead and gone.

She looked up at the glowing window. She looked down at the pool, with the moon kissing it.

She flung her arms up, with a scream of agony, and sank into the deep pool, where the moon seemed most to smile on it.

Directly after dinner, Amboyne asked to see the unhappy correspondence of which he was to be the judge.

Raby went for the letters, and laid them before him. He took up the fatal letter. "Why, this is not written by Mrs. Little. I know her neat Italian hand too well. See how the letters slant and straggle."

"Oh! but you must allow for the writer's agitation."

"Why should I allow for it? *You didn't.* Who can look at this scrawl, and not see that the poor heart-broken creature was not herself when she wrote it? This is not a letter,—it is a mere scream of agony. Put yourself in her place. Imagine yourself a woman,—a creature in whom the feelings overpower the judgment. Consider the shock, the wound, the phrenzy; and, besides, she had no idea that you left this house to get her husband the money from your own funds."

"She never shall know it either."

"She does know it. I have told her. And, poor thing, she thinks she was the only one to blame. She seeks your forgiveness. She pines for it. This is the true cause of her illness; and I believe, if you could forgive her and love her, it might yet save her life."

"Then tell her I blame myself as much as her. Tell her my house, my arms, and my heart are open to her. Amboyne, you are a true friend, and a worthy man. God bless you. How shall we get her here, poor soul? Will you go for her, or shall I?"

"Let me sleep on that," said Doctor Amboyne.

In the course of the evening, Doctor Amboyne told Raby all the reports about Jael Dence and Henry Little.

"What does that matter now?" said Raby, with a sigh.

Whenever a servant came into the room, Amboyne asked him if Jael had arrived.

Raby shared his curiosity, but not his anxiety. "The girl knows her friends," said he. "She will have her cry out, you may depend; but, after that, she will find her way here, and, when she has got over it a little, I shall be sure to learn from her whether he was her lover, and where he was when the place was blown up. A Dence never lies to a Raby."

But, when nine o'clock struck and there were no tidings of her, Raby began to share the Doctor's uneasiness, and also to be rather angry and impatient.

"Confound the girl," said he. "Her grandfathers have stood by mine, in their danger and trouble, for two hundred years; and now, in her trouble, she slinks away from me."

"Put yourself in her place," said Amboyne. "Ten to one she thinks you are offended about her and Henry. She is afraid to come near you."

"What, when I ask her?"

"Through your stupid lazy servants, who, to save themselves trouble, have very likely told somebody else to tell her; and we know what comes of that process. Ten to one the invitation has either missed her altogether, or come to her divested of all that is kind and soothing. And remember, she is not a man. She is a poor girl, full of shame and apprehension, and needs a gentle encouraging hand to draw her here. Do, for once, put yourself in a woman's place,—you were born of a woman."

"You are right," said Raby. "I will send down a carriage for her, with a line in my own hand."

He did so.

At eleven, the servant came back with the news that Jael Dence was not at home. She had been seen wandering about the country, and was believed to be wrong in her head. George, the blacksmith, and others, were gone up to the old church after her.

"Turn out with torches, every man jack of you, and find her," said Raby.

As for Raby and Amboyne, they sat by the fireside, and conversed together,—principally about poor Mrs. Little; but the conversation was languid.

A few minutes after midnight, a terrible scream was heard. It was uttered out of doors, yet it seemed to penetrate the very room where Raby and Amboyne were seated. Both men started to their feet. The scream was not repeated. They looked at each other.

"It was in my garden," said Raby; and, with some little difficulty, he opened the window, and ran out, followed by Amboyne.

They looked but could see nothing.

But, with that death-shriek ringing in their ears, they wasted no time. Raby waved Amboyne to the left, and himself dashed off to the right, and they scoured the lawn in less than a minute.

A cry of horror from Raby! He had found the body of a woman floating in a pool of the river, head downwards.

He dashed into the water directly, and drew it to the bank: Doctor Amboyne helped him, and they got it out on dry land. The face was ghastly: the body still.

"Turn her face downwards," said Amboyne, "give her every chance. Carry her gently."

One took the shoulders, the other the feet; they carried her slowly in and laid her gently down before the fire.

She lay like dripping marble.

Her clothes clinging tightly round her, revealed her marvellous form, and limbs of antique mould; but all so deadly still.

Amboyne kneeled over her, searching, in vain, for some sign of life. He groaned.

"Oh!" said he, "is it possible that such a creature as this can be cut off in its prime?"

"Dead!" cried Raby, trembling all over. "Oh, God forbid! One of her ancestors saved a Raby's life in battle, another saved a Raby in a foaming flood: and I couldn't save her in a dead pool! She is the last of that loyal race, and I'm the last Raby. Farewell Dence! Farewell Raby!"

Whilst he bemoaned her thus, and his tears actually dripped upon her pale face, Amboyne detected a slight quivering in the drowned woman's throat.

"Hush!" said he to Raby.

There was a pair of old-fashioned bellows by the side of the fire; Amboyne seized them, and opened Jael's mouth with more ease than he expected. "That is a good sign," said he.

He inflated the bellows, and inserted the tube very carefully; then he discharged the air, then gently sucked it back again. When he had done this several times, something like a sigh escaped from Jael's breast. The Doctor removed the bellows, and felt her heart, and examined her eyes. "Curious!" said he. "Give me some brandy. It is more like syncope than drowning."

Acting on this notion he laid her flat on her back, and applied neat brandy to her nostrils and ears.

After a while she moved her whole body like a wounded snake, and moaned feebly.

Raby uttered a loud shout of joy. "She is saved!" he cried. "She is saved!" He jumped about the room like a boy, and, anxious to do something or other, was for ringing up the female servants. But Amboyne would not hear of it. "On the contrary," said he, "lock the door, and let only you and I see the poor girl's distress, when she comes back to this bitter world. Raby, don't you shut your eyes to the truth. This was no accident."

"I am afraid not," said Raby. "She knows the water as well as I do; and she picked out the deepest hole: poor girl! poor girl!"

He then asked Amboyne in a whisper what he thought she would do, when she came to her senses.

"Impossible to say. She may be violent, and if so, we shall have enough to do to hold her. They tell me she threw that workman like a sack."

At this moment Jael stretched her great arms and sighed. The movement, though gentle and feminine, had a grandeur and freedom that only goes with power.

The Doctor lowered his voice to a whisper. "She is a good Christian, and most likely she will be penitent, and then she will cry her heart out. Any way she is pretty sure to be hysterical, so mind and be firm as well

as kind. There, her colour is coming back. Now put yourself in her place. You and I must call this an accident. Stick to that through thick and thin. Ah, she is coming round fast. She shall see you first. You take her right hand, and look at her with all the pity and kindness I am sure you feel."

Mr. Raby took Jael's hand in both his, and fixed his eyes on her with pity and anxiety.

She came to her senses, and stared at him a long time.

Then she looked down at her wet clothes. Then she snatched her hand away, and covered her face with both hands, and began to rock and moan, and finally turned round and hid her face against the very floor, as if she would grovel and burrow into it.

"Are you better, my dear?" said the Doctor, quietly.

No reply. And the face still crushed against the floor.

"The next time you faint away, don't let it be on the banks of a river. You have been going too long without food; and you fainted away, and fell into the river. Luckily it was not very deep, or it might have been serious. You have given us a fine fright, I can tell you."

While these words were being uttered, Jael, who did not miss a syllable, began to look very, very, slowly round with scared and troubled eyes, and to defend herself. "I remember nought," said she, doggedly. "Who took me out?"

"Mr. Raby."

She looked timidly at him, and saw his wet clothes.

"Oh, Squire, why did you spoil your clothes for me?" and she laid her head on his knee, and began to cry.

"My clothes!" said Raby. "The girl wants to break my heart."

"Eh, dear! and I've spoiled the beautiful carpet," said Jael, piteously.

"D—n the carpet!" said Raby, nearly blubbering.

All this time Amboyne was putting himself in Jael Dence's place.

"Is there a good fire in her room?" asked he, with a significant look.

Raby took the hint, and said he would go and see.

As soon as he was out of the room, the transmigrator began to talk very fast to Jael. "Now look here, Jael, that poor man is alone in the world now, and very sad; he wants you to keep his house for him: he has been sending messages all day after you, and your room has been ready ever so long."

"My room in this house!"

"Yes. But we could not find you. However, here you are. Now you must not go back to the farm. The poor Squire won't be quite so sad if he sees you about him. You know he was always fond of you Dences. You should have seen him cry over you just now, when he thought you were dead."

"I am more cared for than I thought," said Jael, softly.

"Yes, but not more than you deserve, my dear." He dipped a sponge-cake in wine. "Oblige me by eating that."

She took it submissively.

"Now another."

She ate another, and a third.

"It's a very wicked lass you are so good to," said she, softly, and some gentle tears began to flow.

"Stuff and nonsense!" said the Doctor. "What do you know about wickedness? I'm a better judge of that than you, and I say you are the best girl, and the most unselfish girl in the world; and the proof is that, instead of sitting down and nursing your own griefs, you are going to pluck up courage, and be a comfort to poor Mr. Raby in his lonely condition."

These words appeared to sink into Jael's mind: she put her hands to her head, and pondered them. Perhaps she might have replied to them, but Raby came down, and ordered her to her apartment.

She took a step or two in that direction, but presently drew back and would not move. "The women folk! They'll see me on the stair, this figure."

"Not they. They are all in bed."

"Are they so? Then please let me go to the kitchen for a dry cloth or two."

"What to do?"

"To dry the rug a bit. Just look, what a mess I've made!"

"I'll say it was the dog."

"Will you, though? Oh, but you are a good friend to me this night. Then I'll go. Let me wring my gown a bit, not to mess the stairs as well."

"No, no; I'll take all the blame. Will you go, or must the Doctor and I carry you?"

"Nay, nay, there's no need. Your will is my pleasure, sir."

So Mr. Raby showed Jael to her room, and opened a great wardrobe, and took out several armsful of antique female habiliments, and flung them on the floor: rich velvets, more or less faded, old brocades, lace scarves, chemises with lace borders; in short, an accumulation of centuries. He soon erected a mound of these things in the middle of the floor, and told her to wear what she liked, but to be sure and air the things well first; "for," said he, "it is a hundred years or so since they went on any woman's back. Now, say your prayers like a good girl, and go to bed."

"Ay," said Jael, solemnly, "I shall say my prayers, you may be sure."

As he left the room she said, in a sort of patient way, "Good Squire, I am willing to live, since you are so lonely."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Early next morning Mr. Raby was disturbed by female voices in a high key. He opened his window quietly, intending to throw in his bass with startling effect, when, to his surprise, he found the disputants were his dairymaid and Jael Dence.

"And who are you that interferes with me in my work? Where do you come from? Did ye get in over the wall? for ye never came in at no door. Who are you?"

"I am one that won't see the good Squire wronged. Aren't ye ashamed? What, eat his bread, and take his wage, and then steal his butter!"

"If ye call me a thief, I'll law ye. Thief yourself! you don't belong to the house; whose gown have you got on your back? Here, James! Tom! here's a strange woman making off with the Squire's lady's clothes, and two pounds of butter to boot."

Jael was taken aback for a moment by this audacious attack, and surveyed her borrowed habiliments with a blush of confusion. Several servants came about at the noise, and her situation bade fair to be a very unpleasant one: but Mr. Raby put in his word; "Hold your tongues, all of ye. Now, Jael Dence, what is the matter?"

Instantly all eyes were turned up to the window with a start, and Jael told her tale: "Sir," said she, "I did see this young woman take out something from under her apron, and give it to a little girl. I thought there was something amiss, and I stopped the girl at the gate, and questioned her what she was carrying off so sly. She gives a squeak and drops it directly, and takes to her heels. I took it up and brought it in, and here it is, two beautiful pounds of butter, fresh churned; look else!"—here she undid a linen wrap, and displayed the butter—"so I challenged the dairy-maid here. She says I'm a thief,—and that I leave to you, Squire; you know whether I come of thieves or honest folk; but what I want to know from her is, why her lass dropped the butter and took to her heels at a word?"

"Now, my good Jael," said the Squire, "if you are going to interfere every time you catch my servants pilfering, you will have a hard time of it. However, zeal is too rare a thing for me to discourage it. I must make an example. Hy, you young woman: I daresay you are no worse than the rest, but you are the one that is found out; so you must pack up your clothes, and begone."

"Not without a month's warning, or a month's wage, sir, if you please," said the dairymaid, pertly.

"If I catch you in the house when I come down, I'll send you to prison, on my own warrant, with the butter tied round your neck."

At this direful threat the offender began to blubber, and speedily disappeared to pack her box.

Mr. Raby then told the other servants that Jael Dence was the new

housekeeper, and that a person of her character was evidently required in the house; they must all treat her with respect, or leave his service. Thereupon two gave warning, and Mr. Raby, who never kept a servant a day after that servant had given him warning, had them up to his room, and paid them a month's wages. "And now," said he, "for the honour of the house, don't leave us fasting; but eat a good breakfast, and then go to the devil."

At his own breakfast he related the incident to Doctor Amboyne, with a characteristic comment: "And the fools say there is nothing in race. So likely, that of all animals man alone should be exempt from the law of nature! Take a drowning watch-dog out of the water and put him in a strange house; he is scarcely dry before he sets to work to protect it. Take a drowning Dence into your house, and she is up with the lark to look after your interests. That girl connive and let the man be robbed whose roof shelters her? She *couldn't;* it is not in her blood. I'm afraid there's to be a crusade against petty larceny in this house, and more row about it than it is worth. No matter; I shall support the crusader, on principle. It is not for me to check honest impulses, nor to fight against nature in almost the only thing where she commands my respect."

"Very well," said the Doctor, "that is settled: so now let us talk of something more important. How are we to get your sister, in her delicate state, from Wales to this place?"

"Why I will go for her myself, to be sure."

"Raby, your heart is in the right place, after all. But, when she is here, how are we to conceal her unhappy son's fate from her? It will be more difficult than ever, now Jael Dence is in the house."

"Why so? We must take the girl into our confidence; that is all."

"The sooner the better then. Let us have her in here."

Jael was sent for, and Mr. Raby requested her to take a seat, and give all her attention to something Doctor Amboyne had to say.

Doctor Amboyne then told her, with quiet earnestness, that Mrs. Little was at present so ill and weak he felt sure the news of Henry's death would kill her.

"Ay, poor soul!" said Jael, and began to cry bitterly.

The Doctor held his peace, and cast a disconsolate look on Raby, as much as to say "We shall get no efficient aid in this quarter."

After a little while Jael dried her eyes, and said, "Go on, sir. I must needs cry before you now and then: 'tisn't to say I shall ever cry before *her*."

"Well, then, if we *can* get her safe to this place, and keep her in the dark for a few months, I think we may save her life. Everything else will be in her favour here: her native air, cherished memories, her brother's love—and, after all, it was fretting about her quarrel with him that first undermined her health and spirits.—Well, we shall remove the cause, and then perhaps the effect may go. But how are we to keep the said truth from her?"

"Let me think," said Jael Dence. "My head is a deal clearer since last night."

She leaned her chin upon her hand, and her face and brow showed signs of intellectual power no one had ever observed in them before.

"Who is to go for her?" said she at last.

"I am going myself."

"That is a mistake at starting, begging your worship's pardon. Why, the very sight of you might startle her into her grave. Nay, you'll give me the money—for mine is all in the Savings Bank—and I shall go for her myself. I shall tell her Squire is longing for her, and that I'm to be here for fear she might feel strange. She always liked me, poor soul. I shall get her safe here, you needn't fear for that. But, when she is here"—the chin rested on the hand again—"well, the Doctor must forbid visitors. Miss Grace must be told not to write. Every newspaper must be read before she is allowed to see it. And, Squire, you will be very kind to her when you are in her company; but we must manage, somehow or other, so that you can keep out of her way."

"What for, in Heaven's name?"

"Sir, we shall have to lie from morn to night; and you will be a bungler at that, saving your presence. If there's a servant left in the house who knows, I'd give that servant a present, and part with her before Mrs. Little sets her foot in the house."

"This sounds very sensible," said Raby. "I am a novice at lying. But I shall cultivate the art for poor Edith's sake. I'm not a fanatic: there is justifiable homicide, so why not justifiable facticide?"

"Raby," said the Doctor, "this young woman has said enough to show me that she is more fit to conduct this delicate undertaking than either you or I. Let us profit by the discovery, put our vanity in our pocket, and give her the command. My dear, you see the importance: you see the difficulty: now will you undertake it?"

"I will, sir," said Jael, firmly; "and I look to succeed, God willing. I shall be in Wales this afternoon."

"Well, but would you not be the better yourself for one day's rest?"

"No, sir. I've learned, with a sad heart, what one day may bring forth. After that, I'm sworn never to throw away a day. And, as for sitting down and thinking, 'tis the worst thing I can do. I do thank God that in this, my own heavy trouble, I'm not tied to my sad thoughts, but can get about, and do a little bit of good for Raby House. Do what I will, 'tis but giving them back one pig out of their own farrow; for we owe all we have to them."

With this she retired to prepare for her journey, leaving both the gentlemen lost in admiration of her simple virtues, and the clear intelligence she had shown them in few words.

She travelled into Wales that very day, and many a burst of bitter grief she had all by herself in the train.

At six P.M. she stood before Mrs. Little with a smiling countenance. Mrs. Little welcomed her with some little pleasure and much surprise.

"Good news, madam," said Jael. "Squire Raby has sent me to bring you to Raby Hall. He wanted to come himself; but I would not let him."

"That is good news," said Mrs. Little, languidly. "Now I shall die at peace with my brother, at peace with all mankind, I hope."

"You'll die when your time comes," said Jael. "But you have got a shorter journey before you at present, and that is to Raby Hall."

"Raby Hall! I shall never see it again. I have no strength to move. I am worn out with the battle of life. Stay with me here, and close my eyes."

"Of course I shall stay with you," said Jael, and began to gossip with every appearance of carelessness.

Next morning, with infinite difficulty, she persuaded the poor jaundiced lady to show her Aberystwith. She took the tickets herself, and got her patient halfway to Hillsborough. Next day, with less difficulty, to Raby Hall. All had been settled before. Edith Little was shown into her old bedroom, adorned with pyramids of flowers in her honour; and there she found a loving line from Guy, begging her pardon for his past harshness, and telling her she was to send for him as soon as she felt strong enough to meet.

That evening, brother and sister were clasped in each other's arms, and wept tears of affection and regret over each other.

Jael Dence slept on a camp-bed in Mrs. Little's room, which was very spacious, and watched her, and was always about her. Under private advice from Doctor Amboyne, she superintended her patient's diet, and, by soft indomitable perseverance, compelled her to walk every day, and fight against her fatal lassitude.

Heaven rewarded her by giving her a warm and tender affection for her poor patient, that did something to fill her own yearning and desolate heart.

Here I must leave them both for the present, and show how these events affected the main characters of my story.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Just outside the little seaside town of Eastbank is a house, which, being very old, contrasts agreeably with the pretentious villas fashion has raised. It is roomy inside, yet outside it looks like a cottage: low, rambling, gabled, and picturesque. It stands on a slope just above the sea, and its front garden runs down almost to the seashore. The aspect is southerly. The placid sea looks like a beautiful lake; for, about two miles out, a great tongue of land runs across, and keeps the tempests out.

The cottage itself was now clothed deep with green creepers, and its verandah with jessamine; and the low white walls of the garden were

beautiful with vine-leaves and huge fig-leaves, that ran up them and about them, and waved over them in tropical luxuriance. In short, the house was a very bower, and looked the abode of bliss; and this time last year a young couple had spent their honeymoon there, and left it with a sigh. But one place sees many minds; and now this sweet place was the bed, on which drooped the broken lily of this tale, Grace Carden.

She lay in the warm air of the verandah, and turned her hollow eyes upon the sea; and every day life crept slowly back to her young body, but not to her desolate heart.

A brain fever either kills or blunts: and Grace's agony was blunted. Her mind was in a strange state. She was beginning to look two things in the face: that the man she loved was dead; that the man she loved, and had nearly died for, had loved another as well as herself: and this last grief, strange to say, was the saving of her. She forgave him with all her heart, for he was dead; she made excuses for him, for she loved him; but, since his whole heart had not been hers, her pride and modesty rebelled against dying for him, and she resolved to live; she fought hard to live and get well. Finally, being a very woman, though a noble one, she hated Jael Dence.

She was not alone in the world. Her danger, her illness, and her misery, had shown her the treasure of a father's love. He had found this sweet bower for her; and here he sat for hours by her side, with his hand in hers, gazing on her with touching anxiety and affection. Business compelled him to run into Hillsborough now and then; but he despatched it with feverish haste, and came back to her: it drove him to London; but he telegraphed to her twice a day, and was miserable till he got back. She saw the man of business turned into a man of love for her, and she felt it. "Ah, papa," she said one day, "I little thought you loved your poor Grace so much. You don't love any other child but me, do you, papa?" and with this question she clung weeping round his neck.

"My darling child, there's nothing on earth I love but you. When shall I see you smile again?"

"In a few years, perhaps. God knows."

One evening—he had been in Hillsborough that day—he said, "My dear, I have seen an old friend of yours to-day, Mr. Coventry. He asked very kindly after you."

Grace made no reply.

"He is almost as pale as you are. He has been very ill, he tells me. And really, I believe it was your illness upset him."

"Poor Mr. Coventry!" said Grace, but with a leaden air of indifference.

"I hope I didn't do wrong, but when he asked after you so anxiously, I said, 'Come, and see for yourself.' Oh, you need not look frightened; he is not coming. He says you are offended with him."

"Not I. What is Mr. Coventry to me?"

"Well, he thinks so. He says he was betrayed into speaking ill to you of some one who, he thought, was living; and now that weighs upon his conscience."

"I can understand that. I am miserable, but let me try and be just; papa, Mr. Coventry was trying to comfort me, in his clumsy way; and what he said he did not invent—he heard it; and so many people say so, that I—I—oh, papa! papa!"

Mr. Carden dropped the whole subject directly.

However, she returned to it herself, and said, listlessly, that Mr. Coventry, in her opinion, had shown more generosity than most people would in his case. She had no feeling against him; he was of no more importance, in her eyes, than that stool, and he might visit her if he pleased, but on one condition, that he should forget all the past, and never presume to speak to her of love. "Love! Men are all incapable of it." She was thinking of Henry, even while she was speaking of his rival.

The permission, thus limited, was conveyed to Mr. Coventry by his friend Carden; but he showed no hurry to take advantage of it; and, as for Grace, she forgot she had given it.

But this coolness of Coventry's was merely apparent. He was only waiting the arrival of Patrick Lally from Ireland. This Lally was an old and confidential servant, who had served him formerly in many intrigues, and with whom he had parted reluctantly some months ago, and allowed him a small pension for past services. He dared not leave the villa in charge of any person less devoted to him than this Lally.

The man arrived at last, received minute instructions, and then Mr. Coventry went to Eastbank.

He found what seemed the ghost of Grace Carden, lying on the sofa, looking on the sea.

At the sight of her he started back in dismay.

"What have I done?"

Those strange words fell from him before he knew what he was saying.

Grace heard them, but did not take the trouble to inquire into their meaning. She said, doggedly, "I am alive, you see. Nothing kills. It is wonderful: we die of a fall, of a blow, of swallowing a pin; yet I am alive. But, never mind me; you look unwell yourself. What is the matter?"

"Can you ask me?"

At this, which implied that her illness was the cause of his, she turned her head away from him with weariness and disgust, and looked at the sea, and thought of the dead.

Coventry sat speechless, and eyed her silent figure with miserable devotion. He was by her side once more, and no rival near. He set himself to study all her moods, and begin by being inoffensive to her; in time he might be something more.

He spent four days in Eastbank, and never uttered a word of love; but his soft soothing voice was ever in her ear, and won her attention now and then; not often.

When he left her, she did not ask him to come again.

Her father did though, and told him to be patient; better days were in store. "Give her time," said he, "and, a month or two hence, if you have the same feeling for her you used to have——"

"I love her more than ever. I worship her——"

"Then you will have me on your side, stronger than ever. But you must give her time."

And now Coventry had an ally far more powerful than himself, an ally at once zealous and judicious. Mr. Carden contented himself, at first, with praising him in general terms; next he affected to laugh at him for renting the villa, merely to be in the place which Grace had occupied. Then Grace defended him. "Don't laugh at an honest love. Pity it. It is all we can do; and the least we can do."

But, when he advanced farther, and began to remind his daughter she had once given this gentleman hopes, and all but engaged herself to him, she drew back with fear and repugnance, and said, "If he cannot forget that, pray let him never come near me again."

"Oh," said Mr. Carden, "I believe he has no hopes of the kind; it is of you I am thinking, not of him. It has got about that poor Little had a connection with some girl in humble life, and that he was in love with her, and you in love with him. That wounds a father's pride, and makes me grateful to Coventry for his unshaken devotion, whilst others are sneering at my poor child for her innocent love."

Grace writhed, and the tears ran down her cheeks at this. "Oh, spare the dead," she faltered.

Then her father kissed her, and begged her to forgive him; he would avoid all these topics in future: and so he did, for some time; but what he had said rankled.

A few days after this, Coventry came again, and did nothing but soothe Grace with words; only he managed so that Grace should detect him looking very sad, when he was not actually employed in cheering her.

She began to pity him a little, and wonder at his devotion.

He had not been gone many hours when another visitor arrived quite unexpectedly,—Mr. Raby. He came to tell her his own news, and warn her of the difficult game they were now playing at Raby Hall, that she might not thwart it inadvertently.

Grace was much agitated, and shed tears of sympathy. She promised, with a sigh, to hold no communication with Mrs. Little. She thought it very hard, but she promised.

In the course of his narrative, Mr. Raby spoke very highly of Jael Deuce, and of her conduct in the matter.

To this Grace did not respond. She waited her opportunity and said keenly and coldly, "How did she come to be in your house?"

"Well, that is a secret."

"Can you not trust me with a secret?"

"Oh yes," said Raby, "provided you will promise faithfully to tell no one."

Grace promised, and he then told her that Jael Dence, in a moment of desperation, had thrown herself into the river at the back of his house. "Poor girl!" said he, "her brain was not right at the time. Heaven keep us all from those moments of despair. She has got over it now, and nurses and watches my poor sister more like a mother watching her child than a young woman taking care of an old one. She is the main-spring of the house."

At all this, Grace turned from pale to white, but said nothing: and Raby ran on in praise of Jael, little dreaming what pain his words inflicted.

When he left her, she rose and walked down to the sea; for her tortured spirit gave her body energy. Hitherto she found she had only suspected; now she was sure. Hitherto she had feared Henry Little had loved Jael Dence a little; now she was sure he had loved her best. Jael Dence would not have attempted self-destruction for any man unless he loved her. The very act proved her claim to him more eloquently than words could do. Now she believed all—the anonymous letter—Mr. Coventry's report—the women's words, who worked in the same factory, and could not be deceived. And her very godfather accepted Jael Dence and her claim to sympathy: she was taken into his house, and set to nurse Henry Little's mother: poor Grace was slighted on all sides; she must not even write to Mrs. Little, nor take part in the pious falsehood they were concocting together, Raby and his Jael Dence, whom everybody loved best,—everybody except this poor faithful ill-used wretch Frederick Coventry; and him she hated for loving her better than the man she loved had loved her.

Tender, but very proud, this sensitive creature saw herself dethroned from her love. Jael Dence had eclipsed her in every way; had saved his life with her strong arm, had almost perished with him; and had tried to kill herself when he was dead. *She* was far behind this rival in every-thing. She had only loved, and suffered, and nearly died. "No, no," she said to herself, "she could not love him better than I did: but *he* loved *her* best; and she knew it, and that made her arm strong to fight, and her heart strong to die for him. I am nobody; nothing." Then the scalding tears ran down her cheeks.

But soon her pride got the upper hand, and dried her cheeks, and nearly maddened her.

She began to blush for her love, to blush for her illness. She rose into that state of exasperation in which persons of her sex do things they look back upon with wonder, and, strange to say, all this without one unkind thought of him, whose faults she saw, but excused—he was dead.

She now began to struggle visibly, and violently, against her deadly

sorrow. She forced herself to take walks and rides, and to talk, with nothing to say. She even tried to laugh now and then. She made violent efforts to be gracious and pitiful to Mr. Coventry; and the next minute made him suffer for it, by treating him like a troublesome hound.

He loved her madly, yet, sometimes, he felt tempted to kill her and end both her torture and his own.

Such was the inner life of Grace Carden for many days; devoid of striking incident, yet well worthy of study by those who care to pierce below the surface, and see what passes in the hearts of the unhappy, and to learn how things come gradually about, that sound incredible when not so traced; yet are natural and almost inevitable results of certain conflicting passions in a virgin heart.

One day Mr. Carden telegraphed from London to Mr. Coventry at Hillsborough, that he was coming down to Eastbank by the midday express, and would be glad to meet him there at four o'clock. He also telegraphed to Grace, and said, "Dinner at five."

Both gentlemen arrived about the same time, a little before dinner.

Soon after dinner was over, Grace observed a restlessness in her father's manner, which convinced her he had something private to say to Mr. Coventry. Her suspicions were aroused: she fancied he was going to encourage Mr. Coventry to court her. Instantly the whole woman was in arms, and her love for the deceased came rushing back tenfold. She rose, soon after dinner, and retired to the drawing-room; but, as soon as she got there, she slipped quietly into the verandah, and lay softly down upon her couch. The dining-room window was open, and, with her quick ears, she could hear nearly every word.

She soon found that all her bitterness and her preparation for hostilities were wasted. Her father was telling Mr. Coventry the story of Richard Martin; only he carried it a step farther than I have done.

"Well, sir," said he, "the money had not been paid more than a month, when an insurance office down at Liverpool communicated with us. The same game had been played with them; but, somehow, their suspicions were excited. We compared notes with them, and set detectives to work. They traced Martin's confederates, and found one of them was in prison, awaiting his trial for some minor offence. They worked on him, to tell the truth, (I am afraid they compounded,) and he let out the whole truth. Every one of those villains could swim like ducks, and Richard Martin like a fish. Drowned? not he: he had floated down to Greenwich or somewhere—the blackguard; and hid himself. And what do you think the miscreants did next? Bought a dead marine; and took him down in a box to some low public-house by the waterside. They had a supper, and dressed their marine in Richard Martin's clothes, and shaved its whiskers, and broke its tooth, and set it up in a chair, with a table before it, and a pot of ale, and fastened a pipe in its mouth; and

they kept toasting this ghastly corpse as the thing that was to make all their fortunes."—At this grotesque and horrible picture, a sigh of horror was uttered in the verandah. Mr. Carden, occupied with his narrative, did not hear it, but Coventry did.—"Then, when it was pitch dark, they staggered down to the water with it, and planted it in the weeds. And, mark the cunning! when they had gone through their farce of recognizing it publicly for Richard Martin, they bribed a churchwarden and buried it under our very noses: it was all done in a way to take in the very devil. There's no Richard Martin; there never was a Richard Martin; there never will be: all this was contrived and executed by a swindler well known to the police, only they can't catch him; he is here, and there, and everywhere; they call him 'Shifty Dick.' He and his myrmidons have bled the 'Gosshawk' to the tune of nine hundred pounds."

He drew his breath and proceeded more calmly. "However, a lesson of this kind is never thrown away upon a public man: and it has given me some very curious ideas about another matter. You know what I mean."

Coventry stared, and looked quite taken aback by this sudden turn.

However he stammered out, "I suppose you mean,—but, really, I can't imagine what similarity——" he paused, and, inadvertently, his eye glanced uneasily towards the verandah.

"Oh," said Mr. Carden, "these diabolical frauds are not done upon one pattern, or, of course, there would soon be an end of their success. But, come now, what proof have we got that what they found in the river at Hillsborough was the remains of Henry Little?"

"I don't know, I am sure. But nobody seems to doubt it. The situation, the clothes, the ring—so many coincidences."

"That is all very well, if there were no rogues in the world. But there are; and I know it, to my cost. The 'Gosshawk' has just lost nine hundred pounds by not suspecting. It shall not lose five thousand by the same weakness; I'll take care of that."

He paused a moment, and then proceeded to argue the matter:—

"The very idea of an imposture has never occurred to anybody—in Little's case: it did not occur to me, until this business of Shifty Dick enlightened me. But, come now, just admit the idea of imposture into that honest, unsuspicious mind of yours, and you'll find the whole thing wears a very doubtful appearance directly. A common workman—he was no more at the time—insures his life, for how much? three hundred pounds? no; five thousand. Within one year after that he disappears, under cover of an explosion. Some weeks afterwards—about as many as the Martin swindle—there is found in the river a fragment of humanity; an arm, and a hand, and a piece of a human trunk; but no face, mind you: arms are pretty much alike, faces differ. The fragment is clad in brown tweed, and Little wore brown tweed: that is all very well; but the marine was found dressed from head to foot in Shifty Dick's very clothes. But let us go on. There was a plain gold ring found on the hand in Hillsborough river, and my poor daughter had given Little a plain gold

ring. But what was there to hinder an impostor from buying some pauper's body, and putting a plain gold ring on the hand? Why, paupers' bodies are constantly sold, and the funeral service gabbled over a coffin full of stones. If I had paper and ink here, and could put Little's case and Martin's in two columns, I should soon show you that Martin and his gang faced and overcame more and greater difficulties in the way of imposture than any that have been overcome in Little's case. The Martin gang dealt with the face; here, that is shirked. The Martin gang planted a body, not a fragment. Does it not strike you as very odd that the rest of Henry Little is not to be found? It may be all right; but, of the two, I incline to think it is a plant, and that some person, calling himself the heir or assign of Little, will soon apply to the 'Gosshawk' for five thousand pounds. Well, let him. I shall look on that person as the agent of a living man, not the heir of a dead one; and I shall tell him I don't believe in arms, and shoulders, and tweed suits, and plain gold rings—(why, wedding-rings are the very things conjurors take from the public at random to play hanky-panky with; they are so like one another). I shall demand to see the man's face; and the mother who bore him must identify that face, before I will pay one shilling to his heirs or assigns. I am waiting to see who will come forward and claim. Nobody moves; and that is curious. Well, when they do, I shall be ready for them. You look pale! But no wonder: it is really no subject for an after-dinner conversation."

Coventry was pale indeed, and his mind all in a whirl as to what he should say; for Mr. Carden's sagacity terrified him, and the worst of it was he felt sure that Grace Carden heard every word.

At last, however, his natural cunning came to his aid, and he made a very artful speech, directed principally to his unseen hearer.

"Mr. Carden," said he, "this seems to me very shrewd; but surely it fails in one respect: you leave the man's character out of the account. Mr. Little came between me and one I love, and inflicted great misery on me; but I will try and be just to him. I don't believe he was an impostor of that kind. He was false in love; he had been reared amongst workmen, and everybody says he loved a working-girl more than he did your daughter; but as for his cheating you, or any other person out of five thousand pounds, I can't believe it. They all say he was as honest a man, in money matters, as ever breathed."

"You judge him by yourself. Besides, men begin by deceiving women, but they go on to——Why, Grace, my poor child——Good heavens! have you——?"

Grace was leaning against the open window, ghastly and terrible.

"Yes," said she haughtily, "I have been guilty of the meanness of listening: and I suffer for it. It is but one pang more to a broken heart. Mr. Coventry, you are just, you are generous; and I will *try* and reward you for those words. No, papa, no impostor, but a man sore tried, sore tempted. If he is alive, we shall soon know."

"How?"

"He will write—*to Jael Dence.*"

Having uttered this strange speech she rushed away with a wild cry of agony, and nobody saw her face again that night.

She did not come downstairs next day. Mr. Carden went up to her. He stayed with her an hour, and came down looking much dejected; he asked Mr. Coventry to take a turn in the garden with him. When they were alone, he said gravely, "Mr. Coventry, that unfortunate conversation of ours has quite upset my poor girl. She tells me now, she will not believe he is dead until months and months have passed without his writing to Jael Dence."

"Well but, sir," said Coventry, "could you not convince her?"

"How can I, when I am myself convinced he is alive, and will give us a great deal of trouble yet; for it is clear to me the poor girl loves him more than she knows? Look here, Coventry, there's no man I so desire for a son-in-law as yourself; you have shown a patience, a fidelity!—but as a just man, and a man of honour, I must now advise you to give up all thoughts of her. You are not doing yourself justice; she will never marry you, while that man is alive and unmarried. I am provoked with her: she will not leave her room while you are in the house. Shall I tell you what she said? 'I respect him, I admire him, but I can't bear the sight of him now.' That is all because I let out last night, that I thought Little was alive. I told her, alive or not, he was dead to her."

"And what did she say to that?"

"Not a word. She wrung her hands, and burst out crying terribly. Ah! my friend, may you never know what it is to be a father, and see your child wring her hands, and cry her heart out, as I have seen mine."

His own tears flowed, and his voice was choked. He faltered out, "We are two miserable creatures; forgive us, and leave us to our fate."

Coventry rose, sick at heart, and said, "Tell her I will not intrude upon her."

He telegraphed to Lally, and went back to Hillsborough as miserable as those he left behind; but with this difference, he deserved his misery, deserved it richly.

Ere he had been two days in Hillsborough a telegram came from him to Mr. Carden,—

"*Re Little. Important discovery. Pray come here at once.*"

Mr. Carden had the prudence to withhold from Grace the nature of this communication. He merely told her, business called him suddenly to Hillsborough. He started by the next train, and found Mr. Coventry waiting for him at "Woodbine Villa," with strange news: it was not conjecture, nor a matter of deduction, but a piece of undeniable evidence; and it knocked both Mr. Carden's theory and his daughter's to atoms, at one blow.

Our Rulers—Public Opinion.

A great number of very learned and able men have written books upon the British Constitution. In other words, as much nonsense has probably been talked upon that subject as upon any in the whole class to which it belongs. As I have no desire to make a profession of political faith, I shall not say which of the writers appear to me to be furthest from the mark. I observe, however, that they nearly all agree upon one point, which, I presume, may be therefore taken as some approximation to the truth. The great merit of the British Constitution is that nobody except the said learned and able men can possibly understand it. There are so many wheels within wheels, some for work and some for show: some expending tremendous force in the dark without perceptible noise, others rotating with infinite clattering and buzzing, glittering with the gaudiest colours in broad daylight, that the vulgar mind is hopelessly perplexed. We should be as much afraid to tamper with so marvellous a piece of machinery as a child with the works of a watch; for who can tell that the particular spring or balance with which we meddle is not the essential bit upon which depends the success of the whole concern? If I endeavour to state one or two of the most obvious truths about this great object of our idolatry, it will be understood that I do not profess to have penetrated into the depths of the mystery. I only deal in the most palpable truisms which are admitted on all hands.

It is known, then, that Parliament was in former days the great council of the state; but that it has long since abdicated its functions in favour of certain other national organs more in harmony with modern methods of discussion. It has now become merely a body for registering the edicts of our supreme rulers—the newspapers. It is true that some curious relics of the old state of things are permitted to remain, which threaten in a few years to become unintelligible without the help of profound antiquarian inquiries. For example, it is a singular thing that persons whose proper duty is simply to reduce to shape the conclusions already adopted by the national will should be allowed to take part in the discussion. No merchant would allow his clerks constantly to volunteer their opinions on his financial operations; but we still permit our six hundred and fifty-eight employés at Westminster to dictate articles of outrageous length as a contribution to our discussions, and though these articles are very properly put into small type and seldom read by any but the persons most gluttonous of information, they take up much space that might easily be better occupied. It may admit of a doubt whether such contributions,

if they are still permitted, should continue to be received on exceptionally favourable terms; it would, probably, be a good thing for the contributors themselves, if they were forced to approach rather more nearly to the average level which entitles to admission into the columns of a decent newspaper. Our posterity will, perhaps, be inclined to continue the privilege for its historical interest, when they remember that there really was a time when the national discussions were carried on *viva voce* within four walls. It is sometimes worth while to preserve some antiquarian curiosities even at the price of a little practical efficiency, and the habit of talking in Parliament will probably not be put down till long after it has ceased to exercise any real influence. It will be regarded as a quaint old custom which should be treated with leniency if not with complacency. We allow the boys to fire off crackers on the Fifth of November, though we have ceased to take much interest in Guy Faux; and we may permit our public servants to indulge in their little debating-society in memory of Pitt and Fox, Gladstone and Disraeli. Books have superseded the necessity for lectures just as newspapers have done away with debates; but we still like to hear the voice and see the face of a distinguished man on pretence of receiving his instructions; and perhaps, till some better plan is discovered, parliamentary debates will continue to thrive as a fairly convenient mode of exhibiting our chief spokesmen.

However this may be, it is impossible not to feel a deep interest in the chamber of our real legislature. As the newspapers have undertaken the management of our national affairs by common consent, we may indulge a legitimate curiosity as to their capacities for the task. That they have some merit is at once obvious. Let any one reflect, for example, on the amazing trouble required to secure satisfactory elections under the old system, or all the rules about qualifications of candidates and constituents, the elaborate arrangements for securing a fair representation, the worry about ballots, and bribery, and intimidation, and all the rest of it. When we look at the House of Commons and think of all the infinite controversy, trouble, and expense that has been undergone to get those six hundred and fifty-eight gentlemen to sit upon those benches, we could almost wish the institution to be summarily abolished, and if anybody with a strong mathematical understanding likes to read Mr. Hare's book upon the subject, he may see what troubles are still to be encountered before philosophers will be satisfied, and our machinery put into perfect working order. In the present governing body all these difficulties are surmounted in the simplest possible manner. Every man can elect himself at once by buying, begging, or stealing enough writing materials for a letter. He has no noisy crowds to confront on the hustings; no stump-speeches to spout to an ignorant populace; no mysterious, underhand bits of legerdemain with bank-notes and unwashed hands. He may propose, second, and carry himself unanimously, in his own arm-chair in his own study. He won't have to catch the Speaker's eye, or to tremble as a man only trembles when he feels that some five hundred pair of eyes

are focussed upon him. He can't be coughed down, no sudden gush of modesty will turn half his manuscript into a blank sheet of unspotted paper, as too frequently happens to the mental copy of unwritten speeches. He may even, under certain proper conditions and limitations, speak the truth; and if he is a bore, nobody need be bored by him, except his editor. It is true, that that awful being has some terrors for the superstitious; he acts, as it were, as the doorkeeper to the national council, and perhaps may sometimes exclude persons who ought to be admitted. When we reflect, however, how many get in, and how very little most of them have to say, we cannot suppose that any undue rigour is exercised. A man must be eccentric to the verge of madness, or duller, if that be possible, than the dullest parliamentary orator, if he cannot gain a hearing for any views that he pleases to utter. Once committed to the press, they must take their chance in the great struggle for existence. Where so many people have such infinitely divergent views on every possible variety of question, the chance for the champion of any given doctrine to obtain a wide and attentive hearing, is of course extremely small. But without any elaborate devices, by the mere nature of the case, every opinion gets itself represented, as it ought to be represented, in proportion to the number and ability of its believers. Then again, we have the advantage that in this council everybody can talk at once, and about all conceivable subjects. Parliament is unluckily a body of finite powers, and a very narrow allowance of time. Its capacities for doing business must be limited by the number of hours in a year during which an elderly gentleman can be kept sitting in a Gothic chair in a full-bottomed wig. But to debates in the press there is no more limit than to currents in the ocean: they flow on boundlessly for ever, rambling hither and thither, and traversing every region accessible to the human mind. Moreover, they are conducted in a way which frees the participants from many temptations. It may be laid down as a general maxim, that a man is a greater humbug on his legs than in his arm-chair. Nobody ever made a telling speech without more or less deceiving himself in order to deceive his audience. It is said, I know, that anonymous writing is objectionable, because the want of responsibility tempts a man to use unjustifiable weapons of warfare. That may be true, and, undoubtedly, many cases occur in which the system operates chiefly in this direction; yet we must not forget that it has certain complementary advantages. To say the truth, I have often wished, in spite of philosophers and moralists, that more, instead of fewer, people were anonymous. Perhaps the press would be better if all articles were signed; I cannot argue that point, but sermons and speeches would often be more honest if their authors were concealed. When I have seen a good genuine philanthropist learn to bring his benevolence to market, and to purchase with it social popularity, or a place in Parliament, or it may be nothing but applause at public meetings; when I have seen a statesman degenerate into a blatant stump-orator, or a powerful preacher appeal to bigotry or

ignorance to help him towards the episcopal bench, I have wished that their preaching or speaking might be done by men in masks or converted into anonymous articles, and, therefore, incapable of winning popular renown for the authors. The responsibility which is imposed upon public actors often does them good; but with the responsibility comes a temptation which few men have the power thoroughly to resist. One of the commonest diseases of the day is a fatty degeneration of the moral and intellectual tissues, to which the tepid atmosphere of mutual-admiration societies is a predisposing cause. A good physician might sometimes order his patients into retirement, as dipsomaniacs are sent to remote establishments in the country, where the deleterious stimulants, whether of gin or of "loud cheers," are not to be had at any price. They might be allowed to utter the noblest sentiments, the most "scathing denunciations," or the most "inexorable logic," but on condition that not an atom of praise should ever come back from the general public. The personality of the speaker would be sunk in the great We of vague and mysterious authority; the most eloquent enlightener of mankind would discover how far his philanthropy was a genuine article, or a mere appeal for highly-spiced flattery. We denounce the beggars who sit in our streets with a placard bearing the thrilling words, "I am starving:" there are beggars in disguise of a more respectable kind, who, if they were equally frank, would inscribe on the front of their pulpits and platforms, "I am hungering and thirsting for praise and more praise, and after that for praise of a higher order still."

I am, indeed, perfectly aware of the answer which may be made to such remarks. There is a reverse to the medal; the press has its little weaknesses, which, in their way, are as silly as those of the cleverest fool who ever owed his ruin to his talents. There are idols which it falls down and worships with utter prostration and amazing perseverance. And this reflection may lead us to consider some of the less agreeable peculiarities of our present rulers. They have, at least, this merit, that one may speak one's mind freely about their defects without being accused of seditious practices. They are so vague and impersonal a body, that attacks upon them do not rouse any bitter resentment. An assault upon the press generally may always be understood by writers in the *Jupiter* as referring chiefly to the *Mercury*. Or, if they are a little too shrewd for this pleasing self-deception, one may at least assume with tolerable confidence that few people really dislike an attack upon a body of which they are not avowedly conspicuous members: they can establish some little qualification or exception which takes them out of the general rule. Or, finally, if the worst comes to the worst, our present legislature does not hang its assailants, or even put them into the pillory, except, indeed, a pillory which involves no great endurance, as the worst missiles in use are formed of a few contemptuous paragraphs. Taking courage from these facts, and, perhaps, from the further reflection that the present writer is also anonymous, he may venture on a little mild *scandalum magnatum;*

and, in the first place, let us consider the obvious retort just noticed, that the subservience, the inconsistency, and the popularity-hunting just imputed to statesmen is quite as characteristic of the press. The individual journalist may be a pattern of honour and intelligence ; writing in the dark, with small reason for hope or fear, he is free from one great temptation ; and admitting that he writes for money, we may at least credit him with an amount of virtue equal to that of the constituents who expect to be bribed, but will take a smaller bribe for voting with their conscience than for voting against it. But, whatever be the explanation of the phenomenon, the corporate body, the mysterious We, of which the journalist is an insignificant unit, is often as amenable to flattery and as anxious to catch the first puffs of the popular breeze as the most time-serving of Ministers. It is touching to see how every judicious correspondent begins his letter by extolling the world-wide circulation of the potentate he addresses, as an Eastern subject presents trays of sweetmeats on entering the presence of his sovereign. Obviously the veil of anonymity may be healthy for individual contributors, but the dark power behind it can be propitiated by highly flavoured incense, and is reciprocally not indifferent to the necessity of providing pleasant oracles for its worshippers. The distinction, then, between the cases cannot be that statesmen are made of malleable stuff, whilst newspapers preserve a stern inflexibility and tell unpleasant truths in the confidence that posterity will some day do them justice. There is a strong tendency in both cases to depart from the highest ideal of the spiritual leader of mankind. Neither our real nor our ostensible rulers have any superfluity of independence and foresight. But the difference would seem to be this: the statesman always appears in the well-known and popular character of a dictator and framer of public opinion; he is supposed to mould the character and intellect of a race for all future generations ; even when the development of his opinions coincides by a curious felicity with the growth of the demands made by his supporters, he is understood to be the leader instead of the follower. Public opinion is supposed to have bowed to him, not he to public opinion. There have been rulers at different periods of history who were neither selfish, nor shuffling, nor grossly ignorant, and who did not believe that governing was one branch of the dramatic art, and consisted chiefly in a skilful affectation of superhuman reason; and who even ventured occasionally to say what they thought. I make no doubt that we are specially rich in such men just now. But it is precisely because they are bound to assume so much that the shortcomings of statesmen are lamentable. It is when the fly on the wheel is protesting that it is he who really moves the carriage, and giving himself airs accordingly above all other flies, that he becomes ridiculous and his example pernicious. And when so many rulers have in fact abdicated their position, and are content to register our edicts instead of imposing their edicts upon us, the affectation of originating everything becomes more pitiable. Now the press, whatever its other

faults, does not, because it cannot, "affect the god, assume to nod, and seem to shake the spheres" quite at this rate. Sometimes, it is true, it affects surprising prescience, for it is not in human nature to resist the temptation of saying "I told you so." But it admits with more or less frankness, that if more or less omniscient it is not quite omnipotent; that some contemporary events take place which are not due to its overt agency; and that even its arguments and its exhortations cannot run far ahead of the opinions current amongst its clients. Some statesmen, as the poet tells us, have been charged with the mischief done by "large blue flies;" and many have claimed the credit rightly due to a good harvest or a favourable turn of the wind or the blunder of a hostile general. But the press boasts that it is the embodiment of public opinion; and the boast is equivalent to a confession that it says very much what many hundreds of thousands of people are saying. That vague authority, which it claims to represent, is always present in the immediate background, and keeps a very firm hand upon its vagaries. In short, we know very well that at best it is the work of a few clever men a little in advance, it may be, of the general current of opinion, but compelled by the necessity of their position not to be too far in advance. All which comes to saying that the vices of our present rulers are less offensive than those of the old, because they make less pretence of virtue; and because they frankly admit, what the others were too apt to conceal, the influence of the mysterious power known as public opinion.

To estimate philosophically the value of government by the press we should therefore have to investigate the true meaning of this expression, What is public opinion? How many thousands of our thirty millions of people have any share in forming it, and how many of them are active and how many mere passive instruments in the matter? Is there really such a thing at all, or is it a figment invented for their own purposes by ingenious editors—a sort of universal Joskins who exempts from responsibility a few clever manipulators of political agitations? When the able editor has declared that public opinion will stand this or that grievance no longer, does it mean that he, the editor, and some clever contributor, are, on the whole, of opinion that they can make a little capital out of the discussion; or does it mean that there is really some vast occult power which carries editors and contributors and everybody else along with it? The true cynical view would apparently be that public opinion, like many other things, is a mere phantom to be conjured up by skilful magicians; that it is like the genie in the *Arabian Nights*, which can be unloosed by those who know the spell, permitted to expand till its stature seems to reach from earth to heaven, and then returned to its confinement till it is again needed; or, like a painted monster of canvas dragged out in the day of battle to strike terror into the hearts of opponents. If so, the imposition is at times singularly successful; for the mere sound of its terrible name has sometimes made the coolest statesmen lose their self-possession and abandon their most vaunted strongholds. The more reasonable belief is

that there is really such a power, though it is singularly capricious and much more often invoked than set in action.

To set forth the relation which it occupies in regard to its professed organ, we may begin by noting one or two curious phenomena. Consider, for example, the behaviour of newspapers at that dreary season when things in general obstinately refuse to happen. The simple old devices have long gone out of fashion. The able editor employs an ingenious artificer. He rouses public opinion and sets it to work upon one of those steady *pièces de resistance* which are kept for such occasions. Public opinion is directed against the dulness of sermons, or the extravagance of female dress, or the stupidity of vestrymen. Public opinion undertakes its task with amazing freshness, as if it had never before occurred to any human being that sermons were dull, ladies extravagant, and vestrymen stupid; or, I should rather say, as if those facts were not part of the immutable and eternal order of things. "Paterfamilias," "Scrutator," "A Constant Reader," and other respectable persons, rush to the assault as if their lives depended upon it. They consider that the future of England depends upon sermons immediately becoming lively, as if the vast majority of preachers had not been dull for some eighteen hundred years, and as if the eloquence of "Paterfamilias" were sufficient to produce an instant reformation. The editor probably smiles to himself as the unlucky magician smiled when he had set his devil to work making ropes of sea-sand, and found that he had at last hit upon a permanent employment. A person of literary knowledge might write an amusing article by tracing back some of the best lines of assault from the time when people first began to write satires till the present day. From which it may be inferred that some human beings really believe what they have so often heard, that public opinion has unlimited power, that a few letters in the newspapers will do more than all the dull teaching of all the divines and schoolmasters and philosophers and statesmen that have ever lived. Another popular amusement, again, is that known in conventional language as dragging a great criminal to the bar of public opinion. Somebody who has done something that he ought not to have done, or left undone something that he should have done, is turned out to be run down like a mad dog by a general hue and cry. Sometimes, it may be, he is driven mad in the process, as occasionally happens in the case of dogs. Sometimes he takes things with such imperturbable placidity that the sport becomes stupid. There is no pleasure in hunting an animal when it is too stolid to run away. Thin-skinned people are irritated into the foolish policy of self-defence. Nobody ever yet got the best of a newspaper in an argument in its own columns, whether it is that newspapers are always right, or that a pack of anonymous assailants have a strategical advantage over a single person acting openly on the defensive. Readers, who generally take their conclusions ready-made from the newspaper itself, are, at any rate, apt to think that it was clearly in the right. But a policy of masterly inactivity has a good chance of success. Public opinion gets

tired of one subject, especially when all the talking is on one side. After a time the great criminal who has been dragged to the bar leaves it without a stain on his character, or, even if he has weakly objected to the process and been pulled down, trampled upon, and pelted with mud to our hearts' content, there generally ensues a period of reaction, and in a year or so we only remember him as a man who once had the honour of being notorious. It is an uncomfortable process for the victim, and may accidentally break his heart or ruin his self-respect. Accidents will occur under the best-regulated forms of public prosecution; but the general result is that, after a vast hubbub and bringing together of earth and heaven, some other object of pursuit crosses the trail, and the whole hunt dashes off in a different direction.

Public opinion, then, is a force which, in its own conceit, is omnipotent, which at times produces amazing results, but which is singularly capricious and uncertain, and easily diverted from the reformation of mankind to the settlement of an infinitesimal private dispute. We laugh at Parliament for the ease with which it leaves the most pressing business to form a ring for any sort of pugilistic encounter; but it simply reflects, in the most faithful manner, the general disposition of its constituents. And we may thus define a little more closely the real value of that astonishing palladium of our liberties, that boast of the nineteenth century, and most finished work of many generations of continuous progress, the free press which interprets and enforces the verdicts of public opinion. The press is an ingenious piece of social machinery for concentrating and directing against a particular object the scattered forces of prejudice, sentiment, and indefinite aspirations current amongst the reading and writing part of the population. It accomplishes this object, so far as it is accomplished, by a process resembling that of natural selection. It is constantly raising all manner of discordant and disconnected war-cries. If they happen to fall in with the humour of the time, a general rush is made with immense vigour in the direction indicated. If they do not meet with sympathy they drop out of notice, to be raised again at some more propitious moment. Sometimes the rush is made against some eternal law of nature or society, and after a due amount of foaming and fretting, we fall back again tired and disappointed into our old grooves. Sometimes we upset some antiquated institution that can never be set on its legs again; more often it is reduced to a crippled and damaged condition, and left to cumber the ground till some new turn of affairs brings it again in the way of our energies. Occasionally we do our work so very effectually, that years elapse before we can manage to undo it again. And at every stage of the process we are constantly singing hymns to our own marvellous wisdom and the perfection of the instrument designed to give it effect. The press ought to act upon public opinion like the governor of a steam-engine, moderating it when it is going too fast, and increasing its energy when it shows symptoms of decay. If it cannot give laws to our impulses, it should, at least, give useful hints;

and, like a body of skirmishers in front of an army, help to discover the real position of the enemy and mark the most promising lines of assault. It should reduce what mathematicians call the amplitude of our oscillations—or, in other words, keep us a little to the point, and prevent as much as may be, the great waste of energy which is a drawback from the advantages of governing by the masses instead of governing by intelligent rulers.

How far this duty is at all discharged may be a matter of doubt. As a rule, newspapers may be divided into two classes—the gushing and the cynical. The first class are undoubtedly pleasant reading at breakfast; they give one a glow of conscious virtue almost equal to that derived from early rising: one goes through the rest of the day with a pleasant conviction that one has been so enthusiastic, so sympathetic with the best hopes of human progress, and so indignant at a few lingering grievances, that the mere feeling almost amounts to a good action. It is true that these earnest gentlemen are apt to be a little offhand in settling the most complex questions; that they have a suspiciously intuitive perception of the rights of every dispute from China to Peru; and that they occasionally put on a jaunty air of self-satisfaction, which we might describe as priggish in ordinary life. But then their eloquence is so flowing, that we yield to the charm, and forget to be critical. Ireland must surely be pacified, America conciliated, and the difficulties between labourers and capitalists set at rest for ever by one gush of this benevolent enthusiasm. The value of this material, in a literary point of view, varies according to the market for which it is intended, from the flimsiest buncombe to the graceful unction of a scholar and a philosopher; but it is everywhere characterized by the same tone of serene complacency, and the same optimist views of life. Now, admirable as the sentiments expressed may sometimes be, there is this weak point about them: they encourage the unfortunate belief that every question should be settled by bursts of good feeling. On all subjects there are two equal and opposite platitudes: the proverb about more haste and worse speed, is met by Dr. Young's celebrated copybook assertion, that procrastination is the thief of time. As a rule, the British public is only capable of getting one platitude into its head at once, and acts upon it as if it were an absolute and universally applicable truth. We rave for six months in praise of economy; and for the next six sing the praises of liberality. We discover that prisoners have been badly treated, and we agitate till every cell is made into a commodious apartment for a single gentleman. Then we wake up to the recollection that we are taking honest men's money to spend it on thieves and murderers, and immediately go in for flogging, solitary confinement, and the nearest approach to torture that ingenuity can contrive without racks or thumbscrews. Now the enthusiastic instructors of the public aggravate instead of checking this unfortunate tendency. They have such fine feelings that they can't listen to sober argument. They throw statistics and political economy to the winds one day, and denounce anybody who appeals to

them as a cold-hearted, grovelling, prosaic cynic. They turn round the next, and talk in the style of a pompous professor about inexorable laws and scientific principles, and the necessities of stern philosophy. Each time they skilfully flatter the innocent public into the belief that it is acting from the loftiest motives, controlled by the soundest doctrines. The innocent gentleman who studies their columns in his daily omnibus, is amazed at the profundity of the principles which he has unconsciously adopted, and the exquisite language in which his impulsive guesses are so gorgeously arrayed. He is astonished to find that when he was grumbling at a new tax he was really expressing the opinions of Adam Smith, and John Stuart Mill, and the Daily Thunderer; and that his simple remark that some action of Ministers was an infernal shame is the whole pith and substance of columns of scathing denunciation.

The proper corrective to these evils should be found in the cynical part of the press; and I hold, though I may be prejudiced, that they do in fact perform some good service. They keep up the old and useful tradition that there are humbugs in existence. They remind us, not inappropriately, that the world will not be purified from all evils to-day or to-morrow; and that the remedy will not come from mere spouting, or the composition of voluminous leading articles. They save us a little of the disappointment which follows when every nostrum that has been in turn proclaimed as an infallible panacea has been tried and found wanting. But unluckily they, too, have a very weak side. They are not only too negative in their opinions and too indiscriminating in their censure: that is a comparatively trivial fault, for it does no genuine zealot serious harm to have a little cold water thrown upon his schemes; it is only the feeblest constitutions that are injured by such treatment. But they are certainly liable to the blame of being a trifle too good for this world. They inhabit so serene an atmosphere of superiority to vulgar prejudice; they look down with such boundless contempt upon all the poor mortals who are struggling and stumbling confusedly in the mire of practical life, that we somehow begin to ask whether they are not too free from human passion to be of much practical use. It is very pleasant to have a Solon or a Socrates condescending to tell us what fools we all are; but after a time it becomes a little tiresome, and sometimes a faint suspicion will invade our minds, that, like Lord Thurlow, they may perhaps be looking wiser than any man ever really was.

But it is not my business to find fault with them. Perhaps it is time to be reminding my readers that all kinds of beautiful panegyrics have been pronounced upon the press by Lord Chatham, the sublime Burke, Charles James Fox, and the late Lord Brougham. One thing it has certainly done. It has succeeded in establishing the principle that everybody may say whatever he likes; and the fact that most people like to talk nonsense, proves nothing against—indeed, it is the strongest argument in favour of—the propriety of their saying it with the utmost freedom. It has, moreover, succeeded in enforcing the truth that government ought to have some

regard to the welfare of the people at large, and not to be a machinery for distributing a certain quantity of blue ribands and pensions amongst the fortunate class which, as Beaumarchais put it, took the trouble to be born. But when the press goes further, and takes upon itself to be our supreme legislature as well as our advisers and advocates, there are certain inconveniences in the practical administration of affairs. I have ventured to hint at them without giving any of those practical illustrations which might be opposed to some people's prejudices. It would be very easy to supply a few such details. Meanwhile, it is doubtless an inevitable condition of our modern society; public opinion, whatever its value, is a power against which revolt is simply impracticable, and the press is its prophet. Possibly at some distant day that science, of which we talk so much and know so little, the science of government, will come into being. Then we shall be able to have rulers who can act upon definite principles, and lead instead of following wherever the pressure happens to be greatest. As it is, we have of necessity to advance by a series of blunders and experiments, going ten steps forward and nine back, and thankful if a definite advance is made by chance rather than forethought. The press is, maybe, the best ruler that can be devised for such a state of things, as it is certainly the only one of which we can have any experience; but that is no reason for asserting it to be perfect, or indeed for asserting it to be anything but what it is—an incomplete and unsatisfactory piece of machinery which on the whole does rather more good than harm.

A CYNIC.

Shamrockiana.

CHAPTER VI.

The Decline of Irishmen.

As we look back on the line of the distinguished men who have illustrated their patriotism by splendid talents in Ireland, from the days of Swift and Molyneux to our own time, we shall not be led to any vain-glorious estimate of our contemporaries. The progression has been one of uniform and steady descent. From Swift we come to Grattan, from Grattan to Plunket, thence to O'Connell; after whom we have those that the slang of the racing-stand would call "ruck"—the unplaced and unnumbered throng, who, though competitors with each other, have never pretended to the honour of the prize.

It is curious enough that we should find how something of the character, if not of Swift's genius, at least of his mode of exercising his great faculties, has tinged the minds and tempers of his distinguished followers. In Grattan, perhaps, we find least of this. Plunket inherited largely of the strong sarcastic power, the pitiless scorn, of the great satirist; but in O'Connell we have nearly every characteristic of Swift in a minor degree. It is very possible there was no conscious imitation of his great predecessor in agitation, but there was a marvellous resemblance between the two men in action. There was the same intemperate violence, couched in language of vituperation, that none ever equalled; the same blending of sense and sarcasm, with logic enough for force, and wit enough for animation. The same facility to invent a story, and quote it as an apropos, and, above all, the same discursiveness, so pleasant to Irish ears and so appropriate to a quick-witted people, who resent iteration as an insult to their understandings, and crave variety as the complement of their own modes of thought.

There is scarcely a passage of the *Drapier Letters* O'Connell might not have written. Take any of O'Connell's coarse onslaughts on his opponents and you will detect the Dean in every sentence of the abuse. Each understood thoroughly the amount of reasoning and argumentative matter an Irish audience will endure, where illustration could be used more effectually than logic, where wit is more powerful than dry argument, and where the whirlwind torrent of abuse gains all the credit of sincerity from the very character of its coarseness. In fact there is very little other difference between the two men than what might be accounted for by the fact that one always wrote and the other as usually spoke.

Take this passage from the *Drapier Letters*, and there is not a word in it that has not the smack and flavour of O'Connell's eloquence :—

"We are told that Sir Isaac Newton reported an assay at the Tower of Wood's metal, by which it appears he has in all respects performed his contract. His contract with whom? Was it with the Parliament or people of Ireland? Are not they to be the purchasers? But they abhor, detest, and reject it as corrupt, fraudulent, mingled with dirt and trash. Upon this he grows angry, and will impose his goods on us by force.

"Your newspapers, however, say the assay was made of good coin. How impudent and insupportable this is! Wood takes care to coin a dozen or two halfpence of good metal, sends them to the Tower, and they are approved, and these must answer all that he has coined, or shall coin in future.

"His proposals conclude with high treason. He promises them no person shall be obliged to take more than 5½*d.* of his coin in one payment. By which it is plain that he pretends to oblige every subject of the realm to take so much in every payment if it be offered. So that Mr. Wood has taken upon him the entire legislation and absolute dominion over the properties of a whole nation.

"Good God! who are his abettors? who are his supporters, encouragers, or sharers? Mr. Wood will oblige me to take 5½*d.* of his brass in every payment, and I will shoot Mr. Wood and his deputies through the head like highwaymen or housebreakers if they dare to force one farthing of the coin on me in payment of one hundred pounds. It is no loss of honour to submit to a lion, but who with the figure of a man can think with patience of being devoured by a rat?

"Shopkeepers, look to yourselves! Wood will oblige and force you to take 5½*d.* of his trash in every payment, and many of you receive twenty, thirty, or forty payments of a day, and pray how much will that amount to in a year? Twenty times 5½*d.* is 9*s.* 2*d.*, which is above 160*l.* a year! of which you will lose 140*l.* by taking your payment in his money. If any of you be content to deal with Mr. Wood on such conditions, you may; but for my own condition, let his money perish with him.

"If Mr. Hampden rather chose to go to prison than pay a few shillings to King Charles without authority of Parliament, *I* will rather choose to be hanged than have all my substance taxed at 17*s.* in the pound, at the arbitrary will and pleasure of the veritable Mr. Wood."

Now is not this O'Connell all over? If O'Connell was Swift's inferior in imaginative power and in the marvellous union of wit and humour which flashed through all his writings, he had one undeniable superiority in his geniality of disposition, a mellow raciness of temperament that never entirely deserted him to the last.

Swift's youth of abject poverty and more abject dependence must not be forgotten, nor his manhood of struggle, defiance, and defeat, and less still must we lose sight of his old age of destitution; his life was disappointment throughout. O'Connell, with the reverses inseparable to such

a career, was eminently prosperous and triumphant. That the burly barrister of the Four Courts should become a power in the State, treating with an English Cabinet on terms of equality, and declaring the conditions by which Ireland would consent to be governable, was surely no small success. He was the first who saw how disaffection could be legalized, and how impossible it was to control the ingenuity of rebellion by Act of Parliament. He put his country in the dock with an easy conscience, for he knew how his Nisi Prius experiences would insure him an acquittal.

Nothing short of his unfailing success could have reconciled his countrymen to a campaign so shorn of every element of heroic daring and excitement. This game of subterfuge, trick, and evasion was little to the national taste, and, played by a less eminent hand, they had resented and discarded it long before; but at last they could not but be struck with admiration at the resources of that Celtic cleverness which was baffling all the wisdom of a Cabinet, and making the stronger country accept the conditions and the terms of the weaker. O'Connell had made the case of Ireland a record before the courts, and by his skilful conduct of the trial he had assured himself of the verdict. Never before had an English House of Commons been treated like a law court, where, with every licence of an advocate, the counsel could assail character, damage reputation, and disparage motive, quote witnesses that never existed, and cite precedents that none had heard of. Not disdaining the act of what one of his opponents called "monstrous lying," if he could but insure a credit of living four hours by his fiction, he applied all the address of a pleader to snatch a verdict without letting the jury retire from the box.

Yet with all this he served to wean men in Ireland from the practice of resistance by force, and inculcated the lesson that concessions could be obtained from England without ever walking out of the ways of the Constitution. Hitherto Irish patriotism had been a game of utter desperation. Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmett, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald had set their lives on the hazard of failure. The insignificant attempt at rebellion, in which no men of fortune or station would take part, only proved how unequal the struggle must ever prove between the two countries. Of the clergy, too, none but the inferior ranks had ever associated themselves with open revolt; and though the Catholic hierarchy were not without strong sympathy with the cause, their characteristic caution and prudence held them back from all participation in peril.

If one cannot but own that the national party in Ireland has gradually declined in power and intellect since the days of Grattan and Flood, and that the advocates of Ireland at the present day are but contemptible representatives of those great orators who once sustained her cause in the senate, we are also forced to admit that the Kickhams and the O'Donovans are at best but very sorry descendants of such men as Neilson, and Tone, and Jackson; and that the treason of our day is undignified by even a passing gleam of genius, or one ray of self-devotion or gallantry. It is not possible to conceive a more ill-devised or more hopeless scheme

than that proposed by Wolfe Tone, when the ships of Hoche's expedition had been scattered by the storm, with no news of the *Fraternité*, the flag-ship on board of which was Hoche himself and his staff, together with all the maps and charts for the expedition. "I took Cherin into the Captain's room," said he, "and told him frankly my opinion of our actual state, and that I thought it our duty, since we must look on the main object as unattainable, unless the other vessels appeared to-morrow, to see what could be done for the honour and interest of the Republic (the French), and I proposed to him to give me the *Légion de France*, a company of the 'Marine Artillerie,' and as many officers as would volunteer, with what arms and stores remained, and to land us in Sligo Bay, 'and let us make the best of it.' If we succeed, the Republic will gain infinitely in honour and reputation, and if we fail *they will be rid of the Légion*, which, knowing to be nothing but desperadoes, will be a good riddance."

"I asked the command," he adds, "because, I take it, that none of the generals would injure their reputation on such an enterprize, but, if any would accept the post, I am ready to go as a simple volunteer."

"When the *ordre de bataille* was being prepared," he says, "we were laughing immoderately at the poverty of our means, and I believe under the circumstances it was the merriest council of war ever held.

"It is an expedition truly unique. We have not one guinea; we have not a tent; we have not a horse to draw our four pieces of artillery; the general in chief marches on foot; we leave our luggage behind us; we have nothing but the arms in our hands, and the clothes on our backs."

What can be well less hopeful, or less promising, than all this? what can parody the pomp and circumstance of war, with more of absurdity? And yet it contrasts splendidly with the ragged ruffianism of the Fenian attempt. The French officers, few as they were, were soldiers by profession, and gentlemen by station. There were certain ideas of discipline in the force, the gradations of rank were observed, and orders obeyed. Compare all this with the rabble who attacked the police-station at Tallaght, or the murderous assault on the prison-van at Manchester! and is the falling-off not to the full as great on the score of high-hearted courage and chivalry as we have before shown between the great patriot orators of the Union era and "the noisy treason-talkers of Trafalgar Square?"

Wolfe Tone, from his early boyhood, was one of those who have the gift of attaching to them strong feelings of affection. He had great gentleness of disposition, united to an actually harebrained courage. His temperament was essentially melancholic, but raised from any despondency by a certain dash of enthusiasm which made him regard himself as destined for high achievements; and while this mood lasted he would wear an air of buoyancy actually boyish in its character. He was too impulsive, however, for anything that demanded persistent effort: while not easily cast down or discouraged, he could be too readily diverted from any plan of action by persuasion or even by caprice.

When Tone set sail from America for France, he had one hundred guineas for all his worldly wealth, and on the 4th of February, 1796, he found himself in Paris without one friend or even one acquaintance,—as desolate as though he had been saved from a shipwreck. He had such an imperfect acquaintance with the French language, that when he presented himself to Lecroix, the Minister of War, that gentleman referred him to General Clarke, the son of an Irishman, who, it was supposed, could communicate with him.

Two questions which Clarke put to Tone will convey pretty forcibly the amount of knowledge he possessed of the state of Ireland and the character of its public men. One was, "Would Lord Clare assist a rising?" the other, "Would the Irish like to accept the Duke of York for their king?" If we smile at the crass ignorance of foreigners about Ireland at that day, let us not forget the crude absurdities and preposterous ideas of the French press, in our time, on what they call the Poland of Great Britain, as if any amount of blundering could find a parallel between English legislation and Russian repression! If, however, the great orators of Ireland have scarcely found worthy successors in the men who illustrate Irish eloquence at the present day, still less have such men as Robert Emmett or Wolfe Tone in the sorry spectacle of Fenianism.

It may seem sorry comfort, but is not without its consolation, to compare the men who once stood in the van of Irish rebellion with their latter-day followers: since, seeing how destitute all the late attempts have been of men of mark and station, as well as of men of original minds and daring hearts, it may not be a rash inference to draw, that most of the causes which called for such men as Emmett and Lord Edward Fitzgerald exist no longer; and that the sympathy now felt for Ireland is so widespread and so sincere, none but persons of reckless lives and headlong impulses would prefer the appeal to force to following the far more honest course of walking in the ways of the Constitution; and that if Tone and Emmett lived now, we should scarcely find them in the company of the Fenians.

CHAPTER VII.

The Last of the Great Ones.

With one great and splendid exception there has been a steady decline in the intellectual stature of Irishmen from the period of the Union to our own day. For such names as Burke, Grattan, Flood, Hutchinson, and Bushe, we should find it more than difficult to provide correlatives. One there was, however, who united within himself all the mental traits that Englishmen like best to value, and all that Irishmen love to claim as distinctively their own. He was of all reasoners the most closely and searchingly logical, and of all orators the most convincing and the most

irresistible of his age. There was a studied simplicity in his diction, at the same time that illustration came from him easily and well. The process by which he built up his proof was a slow marshalling of all the arguments in his favour, without any display or ostentation whatever; obtaining your assent to each in turn, he passed on in succession from lesser to greater, carefully securing each step as he went, by incidentally confronting all that could be alleged against it, and ingeniously showing how it should be distinguished from this or that line of argument, to which weakness might be attached; and then, when conviction was fast breaking on the hearer's mind, he bore down with one of those bursts of eloquence —the most lofty and impassioned—in which all that could appeal to the intellect was blended with whatever could address itself to feeling and sympathy; and all this while he seemed like one so carried away by a strong conviction that his figures and images were seized at random, and that in the whirlwind of his passion he could neither choose nor control his course. Such was Plunket.

Brougham compares him to Erskine, but with this difference, that Plunket's successes in the Senate fully equalled his reputation at the bar. The late Sir Robert Peel declared that Plunket's speech on the Emancipation Bill, in 1822, was the finest display of oratory ever heard within the walls of Parliament, and a consummate art critique, Lord Lytton, has left us an imperishable inscription on the character of Plunket's eloquence. Lord Brougham compares him — and very aptly — with Berryer, and there was in the natures of the two men much that carried out the resemblance :—Great dignity, almost severity of demeanour, immense self-possession and self-control — even to restraining powers whose display would have achieved success, but not the success for which the owner was most anxious—and a mastery of irony that none could approach, but over which each kept careful watch, never suffering the temptation of the brilliant sarcasm to weaken the impartial force of the argument. Plunket's wit was essentially French; it was curt and epigrammatic; and when, to the remark of Lord Essex, that Sir John Leach's brother so resembled him it seemed as though the manner ran in the family, Plunket remarked,—"I should as soon have thought of a wooden leg running in the family,"—the whole sum of an argument was contained in the sarcastic rejoinder. There was an especial neatness in his phraseology, too, that carried out the resemblance to French wit.

I remember one instance of the quickness with which he could point a witty jest, and whose merit as an impromptu there could be no denying. It was when the late Chief Justice—then Mr. Lefroy—was one day pleading before Lord Plunket, in Chancery, and, though with many hours before him, made repeated appeals to the Court to defer the prosecution of the argument to the following day. The Chancellor, opposed in all respects to Lefroy in politics, was well aware with what object the postponement was requested. It was the degree day at Trinity College—what in academic parlance is called the "Commencement"—and Lefroy,

who was a candidate for the representation of the University, was eager to be on the spot to canvass the constituency. Lord Plunket, rather amused at the opportunity of mildly torturing a political opponent, replied to all the hints at postponement by stating that the Court was quite prepared to hear counsel—the day was yet early—there were still several hours at the service of the suit; when Lefroy, losing all patience, declared that a brief delay was imperatively necessary, and that he could not go on without an interval of preparation, which he felt sure the Court would not refuse him. "We will adjourn, then, till to-morrow," said the Chancellor, "since my learned friend insists so strongly on the necessity, and he may now come to a 'conclusion' that he may hasten to a Commencement."

Of the innumerable passages of wit between Plunket and Burke, dear and attached friends all throughout life, the Irish bar has many traditions; and it is only in the fear of repeating what may be well known that I refrain from relating some. One little repartee of Burke, however, I am almost sure I may with safety chronicle. It dates from the time when Plunket and Burke were both young, and in the period of their first successes at the bar. They were engaged on opposite sides in a well-known seduction case, where each, with a sense of rivalry strung to the highest point, endeavoured to acquit himself to the best. They dined on the day of this remarkable contest with a well-known leader of fashion and a great beauty of the Irish metropolis, who herself had been a witness of the splendid oratorical display in Court. "I am curious to know," said she at table, "which of you two gentlemen believes he achieved the victory to-day." "*I*, certainly," cried Plunket, "I made *you cry*." "Very true," said Burke; "but *I* made Sergeant Lefroy *laugh!*"

The popular party in Ireland have frequently attempted to attach blame to Plunket for his conduct in the case of Robert Emmett, and even accused him of a private friendship with the man whom he so ruthlessly assailed, when in the dock, for treason. There is no truth in this. Plunket had not even acquaintance with the Emmetts, and with the single exception of having once dined at a public dinner in company with Thomas Addis Emmett, never met any of the family. That Robert Emmett met his fate as an unresisting victim, and that a generous loyalty might have spared him even reproach, is true; but Plunket's case was peculiar: he had been known as the friend of Wolfe Tone, and in the earnest denunciation of rebellion he made there was a studied determination to dissociate himself from these men of advanced opinions, and to show that he, at least, sought to walk in the ways of the Constitution for such changes as he desired in the State. The patriotism of Grattan, whose memory Plunket never ceased to cherish with a warm and loving reverence, was that which Plunket always upheld. It was Ireland great in every liberty enjoyed by England, the equal of England in every privilege and immunity, free in all freedom of the stronger country, and yet not subserviently losing peculiarities of race and traits of mind in deference

to the dominance of the more powerful nation. This was Grattan's creed, and there is not much to find fault with in it.

In the assertion of commercial freedom for Ireland, and in a determined opposition to the legislative union with England, Plunket distinguished himself as a devoted follower of Grattan. There were few public men more ruthlessly, unrelentingly attacked by the press than Plunket. Of the charm of his manner in private life—and they who knew him thus speak of it as a perfect fascination—his displays in public bore no trace; he was cold, stern, and forbidding, and in his sarcasm there was a degree of indifference to the pain he was inflicting that savoured of cruelty. Many of the comments on him were grossly unjust; as, for instance, when he spoke of certain opponents as ransacking the records of former generations to bring railing accusations against the Catholics of the present day, as men who "turned history into an old almanack." The phrase has been ascribed to him, as though he himself called history an old almanack; and even in the House of Commons this blundering calumny has found a currency, and been repeated as the memorable epithet of Lord Plunket.

To Irish appreciation Plunket's grave and dignified demeanour often savoured of arrogance; but there was none of it in his nature; his self-possession, too, seemed to expose him to this censure, for there was in him that amount of reliance and trust in his own powers that often gave his calm, collected attitude and impressive expression a look of pride and haughtiness. To attempt to surprise him into any weak admission, to startle him by some novel admission, or disconcert him by an interruption, were utterly hopeless. It is told of Harry Deane Grady once having planned what he thought must have caused a distracting interruption. While Plunket was ingeniously following out the details of a close argument, he placed before him a letter, and whispered, "Frank that for me." It was in the old days when that privilege pertained to Members of Parliament. Plunket, who as quickly detected the artifice, but would not suffer it to disconcert him, drew a shilling from his pocket and pushed it with the letter back to him, and went on with his speech, not permitting the incident in the slightest degree to interrupt the flow of his discourse.

Small traits these, but they mark the man most distinctively, and the invincible tenacity with which he could attach himself to a cause marked him through all his life. Catholic Emancipation owed more to Plunket than to all the other advocates. Nor is it without a peculiar interest for us, at the present day, that one of the strongest grounds on which he supported that measure was the increased security it would give to the Established Church in Ireland. "Sir," said he, "I consider the safety of the State as essentially interwoven with the integrity of the Establishment. The Established Church is the child of freedom. The Reformation grew out of the free spirit of bold investigation; in its turn it repaid the obligation with more than filial gratitude, and contributed with all its force to raise the fabric of our liberties. Our civil and religious liberties

would each of them lose much of their security if they were not so deeply indented each with the other. The Church need not be apprehensive. It is a plant of the growth of three hundred years; it has struck its root into the State, and nothing short of a political earthquake can overturn it. While the State is safe it must be so; but if the State be endangered it cannot be secure."

When, by the death of Lord Londonderry, Canning succeeded to power, he speedily sought out Plunket and offered him the Mastership of the Rolls in England, with a peerage; but the bar of England, jealous that their own body should be passed over by the promotion of an Irishman to this high post, so resented the appointment that the nomination was rescinded, and Plunket accepted in its place the Chief Justiceship of the Common Pleas in Ireland. There is no doubt that Plunket felt deeply the insult, as much thrown on his country as himself. He was not a man to undervalue the significance of such offensive treatment; but he was not one to make any parade of his indignation, or display his wounded sensibilities. Unhappily, too, it was not the last injury he was destined to receive from a party to whom his services had been priceless: he was driven to resign the Irish Chancellorship to make room for Lord Campbell, an appointment to which, to use his own words in taking a farewell of the bar, he had himself no part or share in. "For the changes which are to take place, I am not in the slightest degree answerable. I have no share in them, nor have I given them my sanction. In yielding my assent to the proposition for my retirement, I have been governed solely by it having been made a personal favour by one to whom I owe so much that a feeling of gratitude would have left it morally impossible I could have done otherwise than resign." These were his last words in public, and though he lived many years after, it was entirely surrounded by his children and grandchildren, and a few old friends who could remember the stirring scenes of their early lives—events which now engaged his interest far more than the topics of the hour. He died in his ninetieth year, the last of those great men whose brilliant oratory made the last debates of the Irish Parliament memorable in the annals of eloquence—a rare instance of one upon whom all the honours and distinction he had won—and they were many—were still immeasurably below the merits that achieved them.

Plunket should have been in the Cabinet, and had he been an Englishman he would have been there.

CHAPTER VIII.

The O'Connell Era.

The O'Connell period in Ireland is the latest to which I mean to advert, and to that only passingly. The times are too recent in our memory, and too full of influences which bear upon the present, to exclude the

risk of partisanship in speaking of them. Though unquestionably the most active years of O'Connell's life were those passed in promoting and accomplishing the act of Catholic Emancipation, yet it was only when that bill became law his great influence in Ireland may be said to have begun, and that the power by which he dictated terms to England for the government of Ireland may be taken to have dated. Unquestionably able as he was, O'Connell would never have gone down to posterity amongst great Irishmen if his claims had rested on his advocacy of the Relief Bill. There were far too many and too able competitors engaged in that memorable struggle to permit O'Connell to occupy a foreground place; and where Canning and Plunket, Lord Wellesley and Brougham were ranged, the Liberator would have shone with a very diminished lustre. It is true his appeals to his countrymen were couched in language, and urged with a force which none of these great orators could have rivalled. In those statements, all overdrawn as they were, of English cruelty and oppression, and of gross injustice to Ireland, it was very unlikely any of these would have stooped to compete with him. His forte was invective, a wild and passionate invective, which, not satisfied with arraigning his enemy on the particular count before him, he liked to extend to his whole character and to his life, to show him, not alone guilty of this or that act, but as a monster of human corruption and depravity, utterly incapable of all good, and totally unworthy of sympathy or compassion.

In all he said or did, in all he planned, prepared, or perpetrated, you saw the lawyer far more than the statesman. His brief for Ireland was indeed drawn by himself; but it was drafted from the details supplied by others. Now it was Lucas, now Molyneux, now Grattan, that he stole from; the arrangement was, however, his own, and here he stood without compare! His advocacy seemed expressly made for the people it was addressed to. A more scrupulous asserter would not have carried away their confidence; a more delicate one would not have engaged their sympathies. No self-restraint set bound to his virulence, no taste withheld him from vulgarity, when vulgarity would serve his cause; and as he abounded in humour, and revelled in the sort of illustration that appeals to the popular mind, no wonder was it that they never wearied of hearing one who reproduced their own sentiments in the most attractive forms, and imparted a picturesque character to the commonest details of their daily lives. In the society of such men as Flood or Grattan, or Curran, or Parsons, or Yelverton, he would have had no place. Had he lived in the days of the Irish Parliament we should, probably, have only known him as a sort of higher-order "Bully Egan," a man of fluent invective, coarse-minded, violent and aggressive.

As regards the issue he was to plead, O'Connell came at the very moment, and in the very shape he was wanted. There was no longer a senate to address, but there was a people to be talked to, talked to in all the freedom and all the ease of everyday life, and here was one who

impersonated all the passions, prejudices and instincts of those he addressed. More than the equal of most of his competitors at the bar, he was denied the fair rewards of his pre-eminence. As a Catholic he stood under the ban of exclusion, of which his great abilities proclaimed the gross injustice. The body he belonged to were no longer in their former position of poverty and insignificance; they had become rich and prosperous; a middle class, for the first time, had been created within the ranks of a people which hitherto had consisted of a feeble aristocracy and a turbulent, uneducated multitude. To these men, who now aspired to a perfect equality with their Protestant fellow-subjects, O'Connell could appeal with success. It had been admitted by the advocates of the Catholics in both Houses of Parliament that the Crown should possess such a power in the appointment of Catholic bishops as might seem to guarantee their loyalty to the state. This was the celebrated Veto question, on which Grattan had laid such stress, and to which he pledged himself in his seat in Parliament. O'Connell's first bid for popular favour was to denounce this concession as an insult to the conscience of the Catholics, and the people were appealed to as to whether they would suffer a profligate and place-hunting aristocracy to make a merchandise of their faith?

That the masses cared very little for the question, that they scarcely regarded it as one that could touch their own interests or affect their own lives, may be guessed from the difficulty which the press of the day had in popularizing the matter to its readers. The people, however, were at last aroused, though possibly the subject-matter was not even then very clearly understood. O'Connell himself relates the manner in which a county friar introduced the question to a rural meeting.

"Now, *ma boughall*, you haven't got gumption, and you must therefore be guided by them that have. This meeting is all about the Veto, d'ye see? And now, as none of ye know what the Veto is, I'll just make it as clear as a whistle to yez. The Veto, you see, is a Latin word, *ma boughall*, and none of yez understands Latin; but I'll let you know the ins and outs of it, if you'll only just listen to me now. The Veto is a thing that—you see, boys—the Veto is a thing—that the meeting on Monday is to be held about." (Here there were loud cheers, and cries of hear, hear!) "The Veto is a thing that—in short, boys, it is a thing that has puzzled wiser heads than any of yez! In short, boys, as none of yez are able to comprehend the Veto, I needn't take up your time about it now; but I'll give you this piece of advice, boys: just go to the meeting, and listen to Counsellor O'Connell, and just do whatever he bids yez, boys."

The dictatorship which O'Connell exercised was not confined to the inferior men of his party. It extended to the very ablest and highest intellects among them, and even Sheil, however reluctantly he succumbed, had to give way at last, and accept the position and the range of part the great leader condescended to assign him. This fact alone might have warned the English Government that it had not to deal with a mere ordinary demagogue, a man only capable of influencing the uneducated

and uncultivated of the land. It should have shown them that the power which moulded to its purpose the most gifted minds of his contemporaries, and which speedily placed its possessor at their head as a leader, was not to be ignored or despised. It was assumed, however, that gross frauds and falsehoods once exposed, their propagators would be discredited, that violence would defeat itself by mere bootless dictation, and that moderate men, ceasing to be influenced by extravagant pretensions, would fall off from their allegiance and leave the orator to the mobs, to whom his appeals would be alone congenial.

How plausible the prediction might have appeared at the time, we have lived to see how little of prophetic truth it was inspired by. O'Connell's power lay precisely in his fitness for the time in which he figured. The higher and nobler minds of Flood and Grattan would never have gained the ascendency that he did. If they would not have stooped to much that he condescended to, neither had they those varied resources of escape from difficulty, those thousand and one devices by which he tracked the intentions of his adversaries, and exposed the plans of a Government even while they were in the mere embryo condition of speculations, and warned his countrymen of dangers that were impending over them, till he had conjured up a spirit that made their enactment impossible. It was by this watchfulness, this incessant *prévoyance*, that he won the confidence of his countrymen, and Irishmen came at last to believe that, come what might, there was at least one man who was neither to be cajoled by the flatteries nor hoodwinked by the subtleties of England. "Dan is equal to them," was the oft-repeated boast of his Irish followers; and in the game which was played with succeeding Cabinets, O'Connell justified the proud confidence of his countrymen.

If it was O'Connell's fate to be overrated by his countrymen, he was certainly in his earlier career much undervalued by the English estimate of him. The very qualities by which he won his influence at home were those by which he was disparaged, nor was it easy to the critical press of England to forgive those endless repetitions by which all his addresses were characterized, and yet it was precisely through these same iterations that he had made himself the guiding and directing spirit of a people.

"There are many men," said he, "who shrink from repeating themselves, and who actually feel a repugnance to deliver a good sentiment or a good argument just because they have delivered that sentiment or that argument before. This is very foolish. It is not by advancing a political truth once or twice or ten times, that the public will take it up and adopt it. No, incessant repetition is required to impress a political truth on the public mind. You must repeat the same lesson over and over again if you hope to make a permanent impression, if you even hope to impress it on the memory. Such has always been my practice: my object was to familiarize the whole people of Ireland with important political truths, and I could only do this by incessant repetition. I HAVE DONE SO PRETTY SUCCESSFULLY." Men by always hearing the same things insensibly

associate them with received truisms, and they come to regard them as a part of their religious belief. Such, therefore, as feel their taste offended, and their nice discrimination injured, by the wearisome recurrence of the same thought, or very often the self-same words, of an O'Connell oration, may be asked to remember what was the speaker's intention, to whom he was addressing himself, and how advisedly he was incurring what has exposed him to an adverse criticism.

Of his oratory it is not easy to speak—to describe it would be nigh impossible. First of all, he had many manners, and his skill consisted in the way he could suit himself to a peculiar auditory. The O'Connell of the platform or the open-air meeting was very unlike the O'Connell pleading at Nisi Prius, and still less like the O'Connell of the House of Commons. When addressing an audience composed exclusively of his countrymen he gave full swing to every trait and sentiment of his Celtic nature. He knew precisely how much of argumentation his hearers would bear, and where, when the reasoning process had begun to weary, it was necessary to enliven the theme with an anecdote or a jest. As there is no form of wit that appeals so successfully to the Irish nature as that in which a ready reply, a sarcastic rejoinder figures, he never failed to adduce one of these, of which his store seemed inexhaustible; and when he desired to attach a nickname to a political opponent, he did so, with such circumstances of story and such aids to memory from illustration, that the epithet seemed nailed to the object of it for life. To Irish ears there was a great charm in that "brogue," so full, so rich, so melodious, aiding drollery immensely by the sly softness of its tones, and giving to touches of pathetic meaning a depth of tenderness intensely touching.

If he was seldom great he was never dull, and no matter how many had preceded him on the same theme, he was certain to have something new, if not in fact, at least in his treatment of it.

Give him a good point and no man made more of it, and the way in which, for a while, he would constitute himself the defender of what he meant to overthrow, the *Avvocato del Diavolo* of a bad cause, would display a power of exhausting a subject positively marvellous. With a theme too frail or too faulty to be sustained by argument he fell back on a sort of rollicking good humour, in which he would ridicule the pedantry that took only one view of the matter, and laugh at the narrow-minded absurdity that could impart to it any importance whatever. Truth never trammelled him, though what he said of an opponent might in the next twenty-four hours be shown to be false and libellous; that brief interval of currency often sufficed for what he intended, and damaged a reputation beyond all power of recall. He had an immense command of the foulest language of abuse, and was thoroughly unscrupulous in the use of it. Still it was remarkable how, even in his most passionate invectives, he preferred to ridicule some weakness or some small personal peculiarity of his victim, rather than make a serious attack on his character, and in this, too, he consulted the tone of an Irish audience, who are never better pleased than when they can temper their malignity with a hearty laugh.

They who knew O'Connell in his private life, declared that no trace of party animosity or political partisanship dashed the racy good-humour of his manner, that an ungenerous allusion to an adversary or a damaging story never escaped him, and that in his careless geniality there was no vestige of the man who, on the platform, hurled the blackest insults at his opponents, nor scrupled to overwhelm them with the most slanderous abuse.

It is a point much contested, and, so far as I know, very far still from settled, whether O'Connell was sincere in his agitation for a Repeal of the Union, and really believed that the measure would be for the benefit of Ireland, or simply maintained the question as an open grievance by which he could employ a certain pressure on any administration in power, increasing or diminishing his agitation according to the circumstances of the time. No man ever lived less likely to be deluded by any visionary enthusiasm than O'Connell. The warmth of his temperament never overcame the strong practical common sense of his mind, and he must thoroughly well have understood that a more hopeless undertaking than a measure to repeal the Union could not have occurred to a politician. It is, however, in this same hopelessness that we can detect his adoption of it, if we accept the latter solution of his policy, since, in the impossibility of carrying the measure, he secured the longevity of his grievance. Besides this, the question was one which admitted of its advocate deploying before the world all the unredressed complaints of Irishmen, while arguing that they could only be dealt with by a native parliament. It was as though he said—Here are the wrongs which the House of Commons in College Green would inquire into and redress, and it depends upon England whether she will herself apply the remedy, or compel us to assert our right to employ it.

It is in this way, I feel assured, that O'Connell regarded the question of Repeal, and believed that the mere agitation of it would exact more concessions from England than, had the measure been carried, even an Irish Parliament would have been able to secure for Ireland. In the hot impatience of that patriot party who called themselves "Young Ireland" may, perhaps, be seen how little trust they reposed in the agitation, and how meanly they thought of the "false issue" by which their country's fate was to be decided. These misguided, but, perhaps, sincere men, deemed that in this game of lawyerlike craft and subtlety the whole character of the people was being gradually degraded and debased; that trick and evasion, even when successful, were but sorry lessons to teach a nation; and that the concessions which were yielded to bullying arrogance, or flung contemptuously to wearisome supplication, were less blessings than curses to the land they fell upon. For this perversion of patriotism, then, these men hated O'Connell; while he scorned *them* as a set of meaningless, impracticable spouters, incapable of serving any cause, and ignorant alike of the feelings and the resources of England.

Meanwhile, O'Connell continued to use Repeal as a menace to whatever party was in power. If the Conservatives were in, he threatened them with all the consequences that had accomplished Emancipation. If the

Whigs were in office he subdued his complaints to a murmuring discontent, temporarily appeased by certain concessions, and, above all, by the transfer to him of all, or nearly all, the patronage to office in Ireland.

If Repeal, therefore, might seem a mockery and a delusion to many, to him it was influence, power, and station, ability to advance and promote his friends, and, the scarce less pleasing power, to revenge himself on his enemies; and here it is worthy of note, that, though a man of a warm and genial nature, and with many traits of generosity in his character, there was in the vindictiveness with which O'Connell followed up an injury an amount of malignity very difficult to reconcile with his usual conduct and bearing.

Thus the chastisement he once met with in the "House" from Dogherty he never forgot nor forgave. It had been, it is true, a surpassing success, and both sides of the House had cheered an attack which, from his own countryman, and with his own weapons, had completely confuted him, and overwhelmed him with shame and confusion.

When, then, on Lord Anglesey's return to Ireland for the second time as Viceroy, it was intimated to Dogherty that his Excellency desired to see him, it was to learn that he was to be advanced to the bench as Chief Justice of the Common Pleas.

Dogherty's practice at the bar had never been of the highest, nor had his standing placed him amongst the leaders, while his abilities were freely admitted and his personal popularity actually unbounded. When he returned home, therefore, with his good tidings, they were not the less relished that the announcement was made to a room full of a company who had dined that day with him, and who greeted the news with all the warmth and enthusiasm of friendship. That the appointment was one specially asked for by the Viceroy himself as a personal favour to him, gave it, besides, an additional value to Dogherty, who had a great admiration and regard for the gallant soldier.

The hearty congratulations on the event were scarcely over, when a second messenger summoned Dogherty to the Castle. It was now close on midnight, and he found the Marquis labouring under considerable excitement and betraying great anxiety and irritability of manner. "I have sent for you, Dogherty," said he, "to ask a favour—so great a favour, indeed, that I do not know how to frame my request for it. Do you feel yourself in a mood to refuse me nothing I could ask?"

"I believe, my lord, I am able to give you this assurance."

"Well, then, my request is this, that you will completely forget the conversation I held with you two hours ago—that you will regard all that passed between us as *non avenu*—and that my offer to you, and your acceptance of advancement, have no existence whatever."

"On one condition, my lord, I accept all this, which is, that you inform me what are the reasons which have induced your Excellency to make such a request."

After a short pause and a struggle, in which shame could not be

entirely suppressed, the Marquis proceeded to say that O'Connell had been with him immediately after the first interview, and eagerly entered upon the new law appointments. Though making no strenuous opposition to the others, no sooner had he heard of this to the Common Pleas than he declared that if such a promotion were to be made he would withdraw all his support from the Government, and give the administration his most fierce and damaging opposition. "He gives me one choice," said the Viceroy — "it is, he or you! It is, therefore, no longer a personal matter is at issue: it is the fate of a Cabinet; it is the life of a Ministry!"

"In that case, my lord," answered Dogherty, proudly, "I will not permit you to recall your words. My personal obligations to you are such that I am ready to sacrifice any advantage to an individual request from you; but that I should yield to the tyrannous dictation of Mr. O'Connell, would disgrace not alone myself, but the profession I belong to. I hold you, therefore, to your word, my lord; it is for you to maintain or to withdraw it."

Dogherty held his ground and was raised to the bench, and O'Connell, separating himself from the Whigs—the base, bloody, and brutal Whigs, as he called them—began that course of opposition which only stopped short of a civil war through the Liberator's own dread of personal consequences. Though he had organized seditious violence with what looked like the daring of a bold and courageous man, O'Connell was evidently deficient in personal "pluck," and when, on the memorable 12th October, he was told that the Government would prosecute on a charge of high treason, well knowing that they would not risk such an issue without good reason to anticipate success, and aware from what material, inimical to him, a Dublin jury would be drawn, he gave way at once to deep depression, almost despair. "I scarcely think," said he, "they will attempt a prosecution for high treason, though, indeed, there is hardly anything too desperate for them to attempt. If they do, I will make my confession, and prepare for death."

When he found, however, that he was to be tried for "conspiracy," he scoffed at the whole proceeding, and laughingly spoke of how he would pass the time in gaol, and how little injury his health might incur, if he only were to follow a few simple rules of diet and exercise.

CHAPTER IX.

O'Connell's Contemporaries.

It has been sometimes said that O'Connell owed no small share of the ascendency he acquired to the great inferiority of his contemporaries in comparison with those who had preceded them in the public life of Ireland. This is by no means true. Of the great names which the last struggle for nationality had made historical, several survived. Bushe,

Plunket, Saurin, Sir William Smith, Burrowes, Holmes, and O'Grady were either on the bench or at the bar; while of a later generation it is only necessary to quote Sheil, North, and Dogherty, each of whom had already achieved high success in the English House.

For many reasons the bar of Ireland has always included full four-fifths of the highest ability of the land. It is not alone that its rewards are the greatest of all professions, and that through it the path to public life lies most easily open, but that the character and habits of the career are most in accordance with the national mind. That perpetual tournament, where mind is pitted against mind, whose very essence is a personal rivalry with the daily opportunity for display, are immense attractions to a race in which combativeness is a strong characteristic, and the passion for notoriety not a weak trait. The discipline of the lawyer's mind was, besides, the great training exercise for that conversational success so dear to every Irishman's heart, and the possession of which always secured its owner a high place and great favour in the esteem of his countrymen.

In the pre-Unionite period the finish of a gentleman's education was a call to the bar, and certainly the culture of the time has thrown no disparagement on the practice. With Anthony Malone commences the fame of the Irish bar. Grattan speaks of him as a man of the finest intellect any country ever produced. "The three ablest men," adds he, "I ever heard were Mr. Pitt (the father), Mr. Murray (Lord Mansfield), and Mr. Malone. For a popular assembly I would choose Pitt; for a Privy Council, Mansfield; but for twelve wise men, Malone."

Next in the order of those Irishmen who have bequeathed a classic fame to the bar came Hussey Burgh, of whom Grattan spoke in terms not less strong "Gifted with great talent, great variety, wit, oratory, logic, if he had the weakness, he had also the pride of genius. He strove to raise his country along with himself. The gates of promotion were closed against him, as the gates of glory opened to him."

The last of this "mould of men" was Bushe, scarcely, if indeed at all, the inferior of the other two I have mentioned. For purity of style, for variety of imagery, for elegance of diction, and a gracefulness in expression that constantly reminded one of Cicero, Bushe was pre-eminently distinguished. These men formed the Augustan age of the Irish bar, nor have their traditions entirely died out within our own memories. Sheil's brilliancy, marred as it was by every disadvantage of voice and manner, lives in the recollection of all who have heard him—the most astonishing display of varied eloquence since the days of Curran. North, a name almost forgotten already, was perhaps the last of that classic school who gave to their native tongue all the elegance and finish of the Latin, and in whose perfect sentences not a tense nor an epithet could be changed with advantage. North died young, some say broken-hearted by what he deemed his want of success in the English House, and which he entered with a reputation only a little lower than Grattan's. Indeed, his fame at the Irish bar was unbounded, and many declared him fully the equal of Curran.

It is strange that no collection has been made of his speeches, of which even the fragments that newspapers have preserved are amongst the grandest displays of Irish eloquence. A tender sensitiveness, almost womanly in delicacy, ill fitted him for the rough usage of public life, and a highly poetic temperament separated him, in sympathy at least, from the masses among whom he moved; but with all this, he had a manly vigour and daring, that only needed physical powers to have made him one of the most conspicuous men that Ireland had sent to the English "House."

In that memorable trial of Lord Wellesley's era in Ireland called the Bottle Conspiracy, when Plunket, then Attorney-General, ridiculed, with all the withering powers of his sarcasm, the contemptible exhibition of some Orange display, its tawdry blazonry, and its tasteless decoration, North replied in a passage which, ill-reported as it is, will still convey some notion of the style and character of his manner. And it is well to remember that a voice modulated to perfection, and an enunciation singularly sweet and captivating, imparted a gracefulness fully equal to that of the words themselves. Plunket, to conciliate the Orange jurymen, who mustered strongly in the box, had introduced that eulogium on King William which, probably, as panegyric, has never been equalled in our language; to this North replied:—

"The Attorney-General has pourtrayed the character and sketched the history of King William. I shall not attempt to follow him there. I shall not enter into any such vain and foolish emulation. I might as well think to shoot arrows at the sun. Gentlemen, you have heard that fine description. The Attorney-General has laid his offering on the altar of King William,—an offering of his own workmanship, fresh from the mint of his transcendent genius, and glowing with all those divine attributes and God-like qualities which the power of a sublime eloquence enabled him to stamp upon it. But let him not therefore sneer at the poorer offering of humbler men to the same object of this worship. His gift was one every way worthy of him, suited to his extraordinary talents, his refined taste and his superior education, but we are taught to believe that the rude wonder of the shepherds was as acceptable as the gold, frankincense, and myrrh of the Eastern kings.

"The Attorney-General has taunted these poor men with their want of taste; the sashes and scarves with which they decorated the statue were tawdry and vulgar, it seems, and the mantua-maker of King William, as he termed him, did not adjust his millinery as well as might be; but, gentlemen, this is not a point of taste, it is a matter of feeling. The soldier in the battle clings with as much devotion and fidelity to his tattered colours as if they displayed the paintings of Rubens, or the designs of Raphael. I therefore claim for these poor men what the Attorney-General has claimed for himself: I claim the right to express in their own homely dialect, and after their own vulgar and tasteless manner, if you will have it so, their respect for the memory of King William, and their gratitude for the benefit he has conferred upon them and on their country. Such sentiments, or such expression of them, you may tell me, are not

justified by reason or philosophy, and if you will argue the point with me like metaphysicians and philosophers, I shall be compelled to admit that they are not. But be it they are not reason, I tell you they are nature!

"There is a principle imparted in the human breast for the highest and noblest purposes, that, by attractions which we cannot always explain, but which we can never resist, draws us together into bands and companies of kindred feeling: sometimes it is the recollection that we are sprung from the same endeared and consecrated soil, sometimes the spirit-stirring thought that we have drawn our loyal swords in defence of the same sovereign, and the same law, and perhaps the touching remembrance that we have bowed together before the altar of a common faith. Whatever they may be, they are the links that join heart to heart, the fine cords that bind man to man; they are as sensitive as they are strong, and never can be broken with impunity. If the Attorney-General had consulted the illustrious person at the head of his Majesty's Government in this country, he could have told him that even the feeble, pliant Hindoo, who bows his head before every conqueror, Christian and Mahomedan, Tartar and European, will not permit one darling rite, one ancient usage, one cherished privilege to be touched, revolted, or disturbed.

"Not Tamerlane nor Jengis, not Clive nor Wellesley, in the plenitude of their power, ever dared to assail him in the sanctuary of his feelings, and shall Irishmen endure, in tame and uncomplaining submission, what would not be borne by the feeble and enslaved Hindoo?"

After North, but it must be said *longo intervallo*, came Dogherty. Dogherty had no pretension whatever to be included in that select knot which stands out as the classic bar of Ireland; he had none of the scholar-like qualities, or of that refined culture, which, descending from Malone to Bushe, found their last representative in John North; but Dogherty had very great gifts, and they were all of them distinctly, palpably Irish. He had all the blended wit and humour, the airy vivacity, the strong affection, and the headlong dash and intrepidity of the Celt. No hard usage of the world, no rough reverses, ever soured a temper that seemed made for generosity. With his fine person, his high-bred look and imposing carriage, he recalled less the gowned barrister of the Four Courts than the Irish noble of the days of Versailles and its court. He showed us what those high-bred and chivalrous Irishmen were like, who, with all the charm of local colour and European culture, presented to the courts of the continent the most finished gentlemen of Europe. His popularity in the English House was unbounded; and the way in which men gathered around him in the lobbies and avenues of the House to listen to his cheery, high-hearted talk, ever sensible and ever witty, is amongst the pleasant memories of some of the few who survive him.

It is said that Dogherty was the only Irish representative O'Connell ever quailed before in debate. The certainty that Dogherty's manly frankness and his genial good-humour would predispose so many in his favour, and the knowledge that no provocation could disturb the temper

of one who felt that his honour was unassailable, made O'Connell more than reluctant to attack him. In one memorable case, the Donerail conspiracy it was called, O'Connell did forget this prudence, and actually threatened to impeach him at the bar of the House. Dogherty met the challenge, and, in a speech worthy of Canning himself, made his opponent endure, for nearly an hour, an assault in which the most sarcastic ridicule blended with a withering scorn. It was, couched within the form of a reply, a bold sketch of a biography, in which calumny and falsehood were held up to shame, and the coarse acts of a professional bully held up to the reprobation of the House, and yet, throughout the whole, the speaker neither was carried away by temper nor suffered one word to escape him which should violate order or even transcend the rules of good taste. It was a complete triumph, and as a victory over O'Connell, it stands pre-eminently the most signal ever achieved in the English House of Commons.

It is assuredly with no sense of self-satisfaction, far less with exultation, that we can compare the Parliament of that day with the present, as regards those who represent the talent and ability of Ireland.

At that period Plunket was in the height of his Parliamentary fame; Parnell displayed his vast knowledge, his wide and manly views, strengthened by an unswerving public consistency; North was conspicuous for that high-soaring eloquence, that noble enthusiasm, and that generous ardour that marked the man of genius; Fitzgerald, the Knight of Kerry, was there to recall the ready-wittedness, the brilliancy and the humour of the Irishman of the old school; Newport and Spring Rice distinguished themselves as fluent and able speakers, well versed on every Irish question; and though it might open discussion to claim Canning, certainly Croker belonged indisputably to Ireland, and in his writings, as in his speeches, evidenced much that was characteristically national.

It would be an ungracious task to muster those who now, in place of these names, represent the mind, the sentiment, or the capacity of Ireland. The fact is indisputable: the descent from the times of Grattan and Flood to O'Connell and Sheil is not so distinctly marked as from the O'Connell period to our own day; and the public dignity and the political importance of the country has suffered in proportion to the inferiority of those who represent it.

The time of Irish patriotism descended unsullied from Swift to Grattan, and from Grattan to Plunket; after whom came that brood, illegitimate descendants as they were, of the great men who had made Ireland famous, to quarrel over the inheritance and contest the birthright; till we have arrived at a time at which Irishmen have ceased to influence the destinies of the land of their birth, and are only consulted that their counsels may seem to colour the already determined policy of those who rule us.

Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe.

Not so very many years ago, in walking along the streets of Edinburgh, a stranger would have been struck with the appearance of a figure to be often seen there. It was that of a tall, ruddy-complexioned, powerfully-built man, clad in a long blue surtout or frock-coat a good deal faded, and reaching down to his ankles, which were encased in silk-thread stockings, his feet being thrust into shoes of the kind known as pumps, about which fluttered a copious supply of silk ribbon. His neckerchief was downy, large, and bulging, rolled round the neck many times, and projecting in "wreaths like a great poultice," as complete an anti-Brummellite as ever was worn. On his head towered a huge Brutus wig of light brown hair. His linen was ample and spotlessly white. It was the only thing, according to Hill Burton, about his person which prevented you from supposing that he had been "shot and stuffed on his return home from college, and sprinkled with the frowsy mouldiness which time imparts to stuffed animals and other things, in which a semblance to the freshness of living nature is vainly attempted to be preserved." His umbrella was no exception to the rest of his *mode*. It was of green silk, with a crosier-shaped horn handle and long stout brass point — an umbrella eminently companionable, sensible, and large enough to shelter a moderately-sized family from the rain. The stranger addressing him would find his manners as charmingly antiquated as his costume. High-bred and sedately dignified, his manner filled you with respect and carried you into a world of old courtesy and genuine pleasantness, where you had to be on your guard against undue familiarity.

This strange person was as notable in his character as in his aspect and manners, and if you follow him home to his house in Princes Street, you will see in what direction his tastes lay. As you walk behind him many people turn round and look at him and speak of him, and tell one another of some token of the brilliancy of his pen or the humour and sarcasm of his pencil—the mingled grotesqueness and kindliness, fun and power that lay in both. You may have some difficulty in getting into his house, where is his celebrated museum. If you go there with the idea that he is an old man, and his wonderful collection merely a hobby, and show him that you think so; or if you go as a man of rank or a person of quality, and look on him in the light of a showman or exhibitor of his museum; you have no chance of admittance. An old man with his hobby—why, he rode it as a pony when a boy! To be at the beck-and-call of the great of the land—why, he himself was descended from

two of the best families in the country, and felt their blood in his veins! For, as was remarked at the time of his death, he was a good deal imbued with the kind of pride of old Sir Edward Seymour, who, when asked by Charles II. if he was not a member of the Duke of Somerset's family, answered, "No, sire; the Duke is a member of mine."

But suppose you have the *entrée* to his museum. You will see much there that is worth a long visit and careful examination. His collection was, indeed, multifarious—comprising all manner of curious and antique relics connected in some way with Scottish history: pictures,—one or two Lelys and Vandykes, family memorials, and portraits of personages who had in any way made themselves famous or notorious; suits of armour, graven images, old silver-work, trinkets, enamels, miniatures, easy-chairs, and naked statues, all amassed after no particular principle or method of arrangement. Each article had an atmosphere of association about it which it was pleasant to breathe, and its story was often more interesting than its intrinsic merit or value. It would be difficult, nay, impossible, to characterize his collection in a word or phrase. What Hill Burton, writing of him under the name of Fitzpatrick Smart, says about his collection of books, is applicable to his whole museum: "He, through a long life, had been an enthusiastic and vigilant collector. He was far from omnivorous. He had a principle of selection peculiar and separate from all others, as was his own individuality from other men's. You could not classify his library according to any of the accepted nomenclatures peculiar to the initiated. He was not a black-letter man, or a tall copyist, or an uncut man, or a rough-edge man, or an early English dramatist, or an Elzevirian, or a broadsider, or a pasquinader, or an old brown-calf man, or a Grangerite, or a tawny moroccoite, or a gilt-topper, or a marbled-insider, or an *editio-princeps* man; neither did he come under any of the more vulgar classifications of collectors whose thoughts run more upon the usefulness for study than upon the external conditions of their library: such as those who affect science, or the classics, or English poetic and historical literature. There was no way of defining his peculiar walk save by his own name: it was the Fitzpatrick Smart walk." Association of some kind, no matter what, was, perhaps, the strongest recommendation an article could have for him. Thus, although his taste in pictures was exquisite, yet some unutterably bad daub was dear to him, on account of some particular association it had to his wayward fancy. Before you had left his house he would have told you many a curious tale, many a weird legend, or some stray bit of family history; and in the course of general conversation he would have said many a quaintly clever thing. If you had been talking of artists you might have heard him say, "Artists—everybody artists now—fiddle-players! John Ketch, Esq., artist!" "Though players are gone, esquires have come up; all the world esquires!" Talking of politics or history, he, perhaps, might have told you that a Whig, properly such, "always shows a complete ignorance of history as well as of human nature." Did you wax

angry at anybody or anything, he might have told you that "anger improves the appearance of nothing but a cat's tail;" or did you speak of some unworthy member of an old family, he might have said, "The oldest cheeses have most mites, so old families with filthy relations." Perhaps, before you had left him, Sir Walter Scott might have looked in, and saluted him as Charles,—for Sir Walter and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe were great friends. Let us have a glance at the life of this strange old man. There must be much in it to amuse and interest; there may be something to instruct and profit. A recently published memoir, with some etchings and photographs from his original drawings, serve very pleasantly to recall his image to a younger generation.

Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe was born at Hoddam Castle, in Dumfriesshire, on the 15th May, 1781. He was the third son of Charles Sharpe of Hoddam, and Eleonora, younger daughter of John Renton of Lammerton. Through his father's connections he was related to the royal race of Stuart; through his mother's with the Eglintoun family. His aunt, Lady Murray, was blessed, when a girl, by Trevor, Bishop of Durham, an old college friend of her father's, who was so handsome a man that he generally went by the title of the "Beauty of Holiness." Her father is said to have once dined with Swift, and was much astonished at the freedom with which Swift, at Lord Halifax's table, recalled a dish, which had pleased his taste, after the removal of the first course. By the will of his mother's great uncle, who bequeathed to Charles's father all his estates, he assumed the name of Sharpe, but Charles was too proud of the ancestral glory of the Kirkpatricks to drop that cognomen altogether. He showed as much vexation at some one having omitted the initial letter of his true patronymic, as we lately read Sir William Hamilton did when at college, on his mother omitting from the address of her letter the title "Esquire."

The castle in which he was born was a good specimen of the high double tower with bartizan and steep roof common to the baronial era in Scottish history. It is said to have been built betwixt the years 1437 and 1484, by John Herries of Herries, nicknamed John de Reeve, a powerful Border baron. In the middle of the sixteenth century it descended to female heirs, and soon afterwards came into the possession of John Sharpe. Before the union of the two countries, Hoddam was one of the places of defence in the Borders, and, in an appendix to the Border laws, we find it was appointed to be kept "with ane wise stout man, and to have with him four well-horsed men, and these to have two stark footmen, servants to keep their horses, and the principal to have ane stout footman." On the ridge above the castle stands the singular square tower known as the Tower of Repentance, to which Sharpe thus alludes in one of his ballads:—

> No more to lone Repentance Tower,
> At twilight shall I stray,
> And deem I hear the mermaid pour,
> Afar, her melting lay;

Nor see, along the silver sands,
The flitting fairies glide,
Dancing retreat, with twisted hands,
As pipes the coming tide.

This square tower is built of hewn stone, and over its door are carved the figures of a dove and serpent, denoting grace and remorse, and betwixt them the word "Repentance." Hence, although its proper name is Trailtrow, it is much more commonly called the Tower of Repentance. By the old Border laws, a watch was maintained there with a firepan and a bell to give warning whenever the English approached the river Annan. It was built by the same Lord Herries, the well-known marauding baron. Returning once from England with some prisoners, whom he had unlawfully seized, a great storm overtook him while crossing the Solway Frith, and, in order to relieve the boat, he cut the throats of the unfortunate captives and threw them into the sea. Remorse of conscience, however, afterwards possessed him, and he built this tower as a proof of his sorrow for his crime, as well as of his hope of future grace. Mr. Sharpe's ballad, in reference to this history, is sweet and touching. He describes how Lord Herries sat within the tower and bewailed his crime one moonlight night; his soul "sad and sair," and dark amid all the blaze of moonlight. He "gloured" upon the sea and sighed:—

The night is fair and calm the air,
No blasts disturb the tree;
Baith men and beast now tak their rest,
And a's at peace but me.

He has lost that peace which neither wealth nor power can bring back to him, nor "beauty's rolling ee," and he must ever think of the mouldering bones lying under yon silver shimmering waves

That softly rise and fa'.

He thinks of the yellow hair of his victims, and their "e'en sae bricht and clear," and of her who is sitting waiting, singing a woeful song for her darling who cometh not; of the old grey-headed man he did not spare, he says in a verse, which has been thought to equal the power of Burns—

I plunged an auld man in the sea,
Whase locks were like the snaw:
His hairs sall serve for rapes to me,
In hell my soul to draw.

The ballad thus ends:—

Repentance! signal of my bale,
Built of the lasting stane,
Ye lang shall tell the bluidy tale,
When I am dead and gane.
How Hoddam's lord, ye lang sall tell,
By conscience stricken sair,
In life sustained the pains of hell,
And perish'd in despair.

The castle in which he was brought up and spent a large portion of his time, was a ruinous, tumble-down sort of a place. He writes of it in that vein of pleasant sarcasm so characteristic of him: "I know not how the weather has been in other parts of the world, but we have as yet had nothing but winter: frost, hail, and nightly hurricanes that shake the turrets and chimneys of this ruinous pile so much, that we require to be dug out of the rubbish every morning to make our toilettes for breakfast. When I lie in bed listening to the furious winds I frequently think, Oh, that I had the wings of a dove, or of a rook, or a wild goose, or any fast-flying bird, to achieve a milder climate! of the Isle of Palms, for instance, where are sunshine and flowers, and the sweet sunshine of Favonius all the year round. But alas! I cannot fly, far less find that terrestrial paradise of Wilson's in my map; my only hope of wings rests with Sir James Hall of Dunglass and Professor Playfair; and if George Forbes and Cumnin return from their pilgrimage without a palm-branch in their bills and a navigable chart of the island in their pockets, farewell to the prospect of everlasting strawberries and cream, and a certain cure of the rheumatism." He was sent to the University of Edinburgh in 1796, and two years afterwards matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, where he took his Master's degree on the 28th of June, 1806. At Oxford his pleasant manners and striking power of descriptive humour procured for him many illustrious friends, such as Lord Gower (Duke of Sutherland), Lord Newton (Earl of Lanesborough), Conybeare, afterwards Professor of Poetry, young Macdonald, the Chief Baron's son, Granville Somerset, Finch, Gaisford. He never forgot, however, his friends at home; and was remarkably proud of, and much attached, to his father and mother. He prized highly his father's literary attainments and fine social qualities, and his mother's simple kindness and beauty. He writes to her with much affection: "Of all my pleasures the sight of you will be the greatest; you are my only treasure, my consolation in all the changes and chances to which mortality is subject. I feel for you in a manner that I do not for any one else in the world; and when you are gone my selfishness and apathy must render me totally unworthy of remaining any longer there." And, again, in a letter to his sister: "I have often been surprised that my mother, whose beauty was once so conspicuous, should so totally have escaped every flourish of affectation. This is a grand cosmetic, a setter-off of features beyond all the Rowlands and Olympian dews in the world. Here hypocrisy is lawful, and in this way a woman displays, after the best manner, the charms of her mind as well as of her person."

The portraits that he executed for friends were so much admired that the stately Cyril Jackson, then in the zenith of his reputation as head of the House (Ædes Christi), expressed a wish to see both the artist-undergraduate and his work. He accordingly both dined with the Dean and heard him preach. He liked neither dinner nor sermon. He called the former "a painful pleasure, where, although the host was exceedingly gracious and talkative, a prodigious wide yawn reminded us every now

and then that we were dining with a great man." He says the latter was exceedingly dry and full of repetition, "and it was read with such a prodigious deal of snuffling that you would have sworn the miracle of Balaam's ass was repeated, and that an inspired swine was grunting sinners from their evil ways. Well did Dr. Parr exclaim of this man, 'Oh, that mine enemy would write a book!'" Of Dr. Parr himself, however, he had no exalted opinion, and when talking of him, in reference to Queen Caroline, he says, "What a companion for a Princess! I have met him at Oxford, the very worst-bred brute, composed of insolence and tobacco, that I ever saw or heard of."

He did not care much for the mere ordinary type of Oxford men; he thought the tutors unmannerly and disgusting in their behaviour; he hated classical learning when divorced from elegant and refined literary taste. The number of Irishmen at his college was considerable. He did not relish them. "All the Irish youths are giving themselves infinite concern about the Union. We have one courageous lad who wishes himself at the head of the rebels, though I am certain that is not the part of his own body he would show to the enemy; and another who declares he would not go to Court on any account whatever—wishing, I suppose, to mortify the King and break the heart of the tristful Queen. I doubt not that all our Irish Christ-Churchians would join the French were they to invade England; and truly, for that reason, I rather wish the French to come, as our youths would all be hanged, and Oxford have a happy riddance from a pack of abominable knaves."

His political creed is apparent, and comes out strikingly in a poem he contributed to the *Anti-Jacobin Review* (vol. ix., pp. 515), entitled the "Vision of Liberty," written in the style of Spenser. In a dream he sees France ravaged and deserted. In the midst of desolation and devastation is reared the brazen temple of the idol, Liberty. Towards it approach the leaders of the English Whigs, headed by Fox, in procession, after the manner of the court of Queen Lucifera (*Fairy Queen*, book i., canto iv.) The satire is biting, and its language is strong and forcible, though partaking occasionally of the coarseness of the period.

In 1802 the first two volumes of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* appeared, under the editorship of Sir Walter Scott. This was the very work to stir Sharpe's enthusiasm, and, incited by his admiration for such a collection of chivalric and historical ballad poetry, he addresses a letter to the editor, sending him the "Twa Corbies" and "Lord William," one of which had been taught him by a nurse, and the other by Miss Erskine of Alva, offering him, at the same time, others which he knew and loved. He tells Sir Walter that, from earliest infancy, he had been fond of old ballads, and that he had sat for days listening to the "spinsters and the knitters in the sun," singing many of the songs which appeared in his first two volumes. The first result of this letter was that two original ballads, by Sharpe himself, appeared in the third volume of the *Minstrelsy*, published in 1803, and although placed beside those of Scott, Leyden,

and Wilson, hold no mean position in that delightful volume. They were entitled "The Tower of Repentance," which we have already alluded to, and the "Murder of Caerlaverock," containing one verse which has been very generally admired:

Unclosed her mouth of rosy hue,
Whence issued fragrant air,
That gently, in soft motion, blew
Stray ringlets of her hair.

Scott called on Sharpe at Oxford soon after their correspondence. He did not, at first, make such a favourable impression on Sharpe as might have been expected from the character of them both, and the similarity of their tastes. "The Border Minstrel," Sharpe records, "paid me a visit some time since, on his way to town, and I very courteously invited him to breakfast. He is dreadfully lame and much too *poetical*. He shouts without mercy, and pays compliments so high-flown that my self-conceit, though a tolerable good shot, could not even wing one of them; but he told me that he intended to present me with the new edition of his book, and I found comfort in that. He also invited me to his cottage in Scotland, and I promised him a visit with the same sincerity which I practise in the affair of Mr. Yorkston's dinners."

In these days of active volunteering, his letter to Lord Newton in 1803, on the occasion of the alarm caused by the threatened invasion by Napoleon, is amusing: "We have got Lord Moira here to manage our military matters, and all the ladies in Edinburgh are ready to break their hearts for love of him already, except my sister Jane, who dined with him at his Grace of Buccleuch's the other day, and came off unhurt, owing, she thinks, to a huge piece of roast-beef, which, in some sort, protected her from the fury of his lordship's artillery. For my own part I wish the French would come and have done, for the people here keep such a devil of a drilling that a sober-minded Christian can get no peace for them. Gentlemen and clowns are at it from morning till night; the butler drills the footman with a cudgel in the servants' hall, and the cook-maid instructs the flea-catchers with a ladle in the kitchen; nay, the very cows and hogs, at the approach of a hostile cur, draw up in battle array, in imitation of the two-legged bumpkins who are sporting the exercise under every hedge in Annandale."

From a stray leaf of his diary that has been preserved, we find that when at Oxford he must have got through a good amount of reading. During the latter days of March and the earlier of April, 1801, we find notes on such books as Burnet's *Essay on Queen Mary*, Wodrow's *Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*, *La Vie de Phillippe Duc d'Orleans*, the *History of Caliph Vathek*, Aubrey's *Miscellanies*, Voiture's *Letters*, Beaumont and Fletcher's *Plays*, Spottiswood's *History*, Johnson's *Life of Savage*, &c. &c.

In 1806 he goes to Lord Melville's trial, and thus comments upon it:—"I went three days to Lord Melville's trial. The first was taken

up, as the newspapers would tell you, with Whitbread's speech, who declaimed in a velvet coat, a bag, and laced ruffles. You would have laughed had you seen the ridiculous care with which his friends gave him sips of wine and water to wet his whistle, and clouts for his mouth and nose. I thought his speech very clever, but in a miserable bad taste, and so abusive that Lord Melville smiled very frequently. That monster Fox was there, his sallow cheeks hanging down to his paunch, and his scowling eyes turned sometimes upon Mr. Whitbread, sometimes on the rows of pretty peeresses who sat eating sandwiches from silk indispensables, and putting themselves into proper attitudes to astonish the representatives of the Commons of England occupying the opposite benches. Lord Melville will certainly get clear and be made quite a saint of by his own party."

In 1807 Mr. Sharpe began a tragedy in five acts, and finished it in the year following. He says it met the approval of Scott; but it was never acted. In all probability 1,800 lines of blank verse, in imitation of Dryden, would have been too much for the British public, especially when spouted from the mouths of only six characters. Shortly afterwards he published a small volume of poems, which attracted some attention. Scott's opinion of them is worth quoting: "They exhibit, I think," he says, "a very considerable portion of imagination, and occasionally, though not uniformly, great flow of versification. There is one verse, or rather the whole description of a musical ghost lady sitting among the ruins of her father's tower, that pleased me very much. But his language is too flowery, and even tawdry, and I quarrelled with a lady in the first poem, who yielded up her affection upon her lover showing his white teeth. White teeth ought to be taken great care of and set great store by, but I cannot allow them to be an object of passionate admiration —it is too like subduing a lady's heart by grinning." There is in this volume a pathetic strain running through the verses with this refrain: "O man condemned to die, alace!" in which he tells us, what no doubt he came to find true in his own case:

> Time plucks the quills from fancie's wings,
> And tames the poet's laye.

His favourite haunt in these, his younger days, when not at Oxford or Hoddam, was Benham, the residence of the Margravine of Anspach, and many a pleasant evening he, Lord Craven, a well-travelled and intellectual man, Sir Lumley Skeffington, and "topographical Gell" had together. When he first became acquainted with the Margravine she had the remains of much beauty, which she disfigured with an immense quantity of rouge, and burnt cork on her eyebrows. She was very graceful, and could assume, when she pleased, the manners of the best times; she composed music prettily, but spoilt her own songs with a cracked voice; she danced well, and was an excellent shot.

His most illustrious acquaintance at this date was Caroline of Brunswick, the ill-used wife of George IV., whom he terms "that filthy piece of crustiness." His account of her appearance is the reverse of flattering.

"Her eyes projected," he says, "like those of the royal family. She made her head large by wearing an immense wig. She also painted her eyebrows, which gave her face a strange fierce look. Her skin—and she showed a great deal—was very red. She wore very high-heeled shoes, so that she bent forward when she stood or walked; her feet and ankles were dreadful." It is interesting also to know from Sharpe, who had no admiration for the political circle she moved in, and who could thus write about her personal appearance, that he believed implicitly in her innocence of the charges brought against her by her husband. "Before I had the honour of being acquainted with the Queen," he writes, "I had heard many reports of her unchastity. I never saw anything to confirm them. She had much *esprit*, and talked as freely as many clever and most virtuous women of the highest rank, whom I have known, both in Scotland and England, used to do. This is no proof of incontinence. There is an old Scottish proverb: 'The silent soo eats a' the draff.' . . . That she was capable of inventing malicious lies, which this bad woman (Lady Charlotte Bury) asserts in her second volume, I no more believe than that she was capable of raising devils. Devils enough she had about her and could not lay them; but this I am very confident of, that she is now in a place where few of her former companions have ever reached her; and, consequently, where she enjoys that ease and happiness to which she was here so much a stranger. I bid her a grateful farewell."

This extract is taken from a fly-leaf of a copy of Lady Charlotte Bury's *Times of George IV.*, the publication of which book caused Sharpe much annoyance and pain. The authoress, as Lady Charlotte Campbell, had been a great friend of his. He was her most devoted admirer, and took a great interest in all her literary pursuits. When at Oxford he had written many letters to her on public events and public people, with a running commentary in that cynical vein so common to him, and which he doubtless thought would only afford momentary amusement to his fair correspondent. His indignation at seeing these letters in print, without his being consulted on the subject in the slightest degree, was very great. When he first heard of the publication he wrote, "I confess I have felt a hydrophobia to ink lately, for an impudent, covetous woman hath printed some letters of mine, written nearly thirty years ago, which expose my former impertinence in that way fully enough; but she expresses her own profligacy more. Retired as I live, what she blazons cannot hurt me; but there are people here still who are mentioned in these scrawls, and I find they take no notice. So this is exactly the fable of the old grey-haired badger, who dug a hole to live and die in, and a fox tried to stink him out, but could not."

And later still, before reading the book, for it was long before he could bring himself even to purchase it, he writes to a connection of the offender: "I cannot express my vexation about the book you mention. . . . The intelligence came upon me like a thunderbolt; in all my readings and experience I never knew anything of the kind. When

I wrote the silly impertinent letters in question, between twenty and thirty years ago, I knew I was writing to the Duke of Argyle's daughter, and thought myself safe by all the common rules of good-breeding and morality. . . . She has done me an irreparable injury—not as to being deemed a fool for writing such silly stuff, as I am now at an age far beyond the consideration of vanity as to intellect—but by this publication I certainly must lose two sincere friends, who have been beyond measure kind to me for twenty years."

A more galling and trying position for a man to be placed in it is hard to conceive. He had never at any time been particular as to what he wrote to his intimates, and there are some opinions of celebrities quoted in his memoir which are, certainly, very freely stated. Of Shelley he thus writes to a friend: "I send you the *Cenci*, written by that wicked wretch Shelley. I remember him at Oxford, mad, bad, and trying to persuade people he lived on arsenic and aquafortis." Writing to Lady Queensberry, he thus makes mention of Byron: "I have sent *Lord Byron*, which I beg your ladyship will desire Mrs. Douglas to be cautious how she reads, if alone at night, lest she fall asleep and catch cold and take fire. Such authors occasion more rheum than a shower of rain at Vauxhall, and kill more unfortunate ladies than the barbarous custom of Hindostan, or the Act against Witchcraft while in force here. Be so good also as to tell Mrs. Douglas that the hapless young gentleman, whose untimely fate is celebrated near the end of the First Book, is not the Hon. Mr. Something, as Lord B. pretends—'No writer but a knight templar.' U——is a *bear*, the only companion Lord B. had at Cambridge, between his lordship and which there existed a friendship unparalleled save in the ancient chronicle of Valentine and Orson." Again, of Mrs. Siddons: "I met Mrs. Siddons at dinner one day, just before the death of her spouse. 'Twas at Walter Scott's, and you cannot imagine how it annoyed me to behold Belvidera guzzle boiled beef and mustard, swill streams of porter, cram up her nose with handfuls of snuff, and laugh till she made the whole room shake again. I verily think she is even fatter than when we last saw her, and really now is so broad in the pockets that she is a very shame to be seen."

All his life Sharpe continued to be the diligent student, the wayward collector, and was ever deep in research, sometimes into old family pedigrees and stories, sometimes into witchcraft and old ballad lore, and *bonâ fide* historical investigation, as exemplified in a longish fragment on Mary, Queen of Scots, and a shorter one on John Knox. His first historical publication was, however, the *Household Book of the Countess of Mar, the Lady Marie Stuart*. It was dedicated to James Erskine, Esq., and contained a portrait of the Lady Marie.

After his father's death in 1813, his mother had settled in Edinburgh, and Sharpe resolved to do the same; and private inclination, as well as slight bodily infirmity, kept him for nearly twenty years a fixture at No. 93, Princes Street, Edinburgh, which he styles "that untitled,

lawyer-riddled, and deserted city," where all the "women and all the men are virtuous, though the children dance waltzes, write love-letters, fight, flirt, and conceive in leading-strings." There he continued to add to his collection, and ever kept up a warm friendship with the literary men in the Scotch capital. Scott and he—they now understood one another better—were great friends and close companions, and we find Scott consulting him on many matters. The Town Council of Edinburgh in 1814 wished to present Scott with a piece of plate. He chose the old-fashioned tankard for ale, toast, and nutmeg; but could not give the silversmith definite enough orders about it. He writes to Sharpe for a sketch:—"If you are to be at home about two, I will call upon you. You understand,—Squire Sullen's tankard,—the sort of thing in general."

The following letter may be taken as a specimen of their correspondence and pursuits:—

"Dear Charles,—*Primo*, I hope you have not forgotten that you dine here on Friday at five.

"*Secundo*, I send you a curious tract upon fairies.

"*Tertio*, I have discovered for you some curious particulars regarding Scotch Quakers, particularly of my mother's great grandfather, John Swinton, in the article 'Barclay,' in Kippis' new edition of the *Biographia Britannica*. If you have not the book, I will send it.—On consideration, I will send it on chance.

"Lastly, and to conclude, beloved, I want your assistance in planning a silver cup for the Sutors of Selkirk, to be given to the knaves by the Duke. He wishes to have the *birss* (*a bonâ fide birss*) disposed somehow as an ornament on the top on't. Now, as the arms of the town are picturesque, being a female figure, with a child in her arms, seated on a sarcophagus, I thought the *birss* might be put into her hand; but, on trying it, it looks just like as if she was going to flog the wean. Then I thought of disposing it at the end of a sort of silver handle or sceptre; but that looked like a broom, and showed as if the poor woman had undertaken to be the housemaid and child's maid at once. Pray aid me with your wit, for mine is pumped dry.—Ever yours,

"W. Scott."

"If you are to be at home to-morrow, I will call."

And while quoting Scott's letters to Sharpe, we may append this touching one, written when leaving Edinburgh, after the gloom in which his noble life went down had begun to settle round him. He did not write many farewell letters, but Sharpe was too old a friend to be left without a kind *adieu*. It thus pathetically concludes:—

"My dear Charles," &c.—"I should like to have shaken hands with you, as there are few I regret so much to part with. But it may not be. I will keep my eyes dry, if possible, and, therefore, content myself with

bidding you a long, perhaps an eternal, farewell. But I may find my way home again improved as a Dutch skipper from a whale-fishing. I am very happy that I am like to see Walter.

"Always yours, well or ill,

"WALTER SCOTT."

Sir Walter was also naturally much interested in the work which Sharpe now undertook to edit, *The Secret of the True History of the Church of Scotland, from the Restoration to the Present Time*, by the Rev. Mr. James Kirkton. The value of the history was much enhanced by the copious foot-notes, full of wit and learning, appended by the editor, and several sketches. To it was annexed the narrative of the murder of Archbishop Sharpe, from the pen of James Russell, one of the assassins, which Scott advised him to collate. Sir Walter reviewed the whole work,—published by Ballantyne, in 1817,—in the *Quarterly*, and thus speaks of it:—"His motives for undertaking Kirkton were probably solely those of the antiquary, with perhaps also the malicious pleasure of a wag, who delights to present the ludicrous side of a subject, which, like Bottom's drama, forms a lamentable tragedy, full of very pleasant mirth. Accordingly, when the author grows so serious as to be tedious, the notes of the editor seldom fail to be particularly diverting, and rich in all those anecdotes which illustrate character and manners, anecdotes thinly scattered through a wearisome mass of dull and dusty books and MSS., which only the taste of an accomplished man, united with the industry of a patient antiquary, could have selected and brought together." Besides this, he edited Law's *Memorials*, contributed occasionally to *Constable's Magazine* and *Edinburgh Annual Register*, and collated selections from old letters, such as from David Hume to Matthew Sharpe of Hoddam, of Lord Eglintoun to Alexander, Lord Montgomery, &c. *The History of the Duke of Monmouth* was of great interest to him, and what he has left in regard to the life of Dundee is of importance, and is included in Mr. Mark Napier's volumes on that hero.

So early as 1812 Scott had written to Sharpe in reference to their jointly compiling a collection of striking and absurd stories about witchcraft, apparitions, demonology, &c. Sir Walter had a very fine collection of witch books. Sharpe might, instead of a broom, clap two or three humorous drawings to the tales of the witches; and it was suggested that there might be throughout the book a sprinkling of poetry, especially of a humorous cast. This project came to nothing as a joint undertaking, but it probably led Sharpe to append the "Letters on Demonology" to his republication of Law. His mind for long ran in this vein, and his beautiful etching for "The Witch of Fife," James Hogg's poem, is instinct with the character of his study.

He continued to lay his hands on everything that was ancient or eccentric in rhyme. At one time a fourth volume of the *Border Minstrelsy* was contemplated, but what he had collected for this purpose was ulti-

mately given to the public in the shape of a ballad-book printed for private circulation in 1823, which was accompanied by an etching after the German school and a vignette after Hollar.

His later letters are very scarce in comparison with those he wrote in his younger days. Lady C. Bury's work was, probably, the cause of this; for we find him not only not preserving copies of the letters he wrote after its publication, but even destroying the originals of his former letters whenever he could lay his hands upon them. One or two against projected improvements on old Edinburgh buildings are preserved, and a long letter to the *Edinburgh Observer*, with the motto *Delenda est Carthago*, directed against the municipal barbarism, is full of interest. Wanton change of any kind he could not tolerate. He also was roused to indignation, in 1826, by the attempt made to alter the Scotch banking system in accordance with English views on the currency—an attempt which, it will be remembered, caused a vigorous protest on the part of Sir Walter Scott, in letters signed Malachi Malagrowther. In a letter to his sister his views on some books appear:

"I am glad, my dear, that you have the comfort of a son with a sound literary taste—I judge from his admiration of Spenser. Tell him, with my love, to stick principally to Homer (the *Iliad*, I mean) and Virgil's *Æneid* for the truest beauties of poetry. There are inspirations in the *Iliad* beyond all conception, save to those who can feel them. . . . I think Milton's *Paradise Lost* a heap of blasphemy and obscenity, with certainly numberless poetical beauties. Milton was a Whig and, in my mind, an Atheist" (!) "I am persuaded his poem was composed to apologize for the Devil, who certainly was the first Whig on record. Desire your son to read Fairfax's *Tasso:* I think it prettier than the original. Cowley, too, is charming; his elegy on the death of Mrs. Hervey is inimitable. But for wit and reason and wonderful strength of expression, let him study Dryden night and day; not the *Hind and Panther*, however, in these Popish times, as far as the reasoning goes. Dryden has made the best of it, but a miserable best. I have lost my relish for Pope in my old age, his poetry runs all in couplets, and it is now to me like a weak cup of tea with too much sugar in it.

"I go on like the oracle of the Brazen Head. As to novels, all young people of good sense will be much benefited by reading the best of the old school, because they will teach them experience beforehand, and the true state of human life. As to Sir Walter's harmless *romances*, —not harmless, however, as to bad English—they contain *nothing:* pictures of manners that never were, are, or will be, besides ten thousand blunders as to chronology, costume, &c., which must mislead the million who admire such fascinating comfits. The works of Fielding prepare young people for the sad scenes they must bear a part in—the dreary masquerade of knaves and fools. And Richardson's *Clarissa* is a perfect compendium of worldly wisdom, though its greatest beauties can never be relished by a very young person. Considering the education and

position of the author, I look upon that book as the most wonderful thing that was ever composed. I was lucky enough to pick up a presentation copy, which I value beyond measure. Smollet is a caricaturist, with only vulgar dirty humour to recommend him, which can benefit nobody; yet *Humphrey Clinker* is not like his other works, being very superior and surprising as the production of a dying man. I have been reading Miss Burney's novels lately with fresh admiration, as they contain very useful maxims, though the manners are now out of date."

Sharpe felt keen grief for the death of his mother in 1836. Leaving his and her home in Princes Street, he settled for life at No. 28, Drummond Place. There he continued to dwell, executing frontispieces for various books, publishing an occasional song, reading much, making many annotations on his books, but writing very few letters. His last letter extant appears to have been written in 1849, and in it he mentions having seen Rachel Felix act, and heard Jenny Lind sing.

In 1850 his health visibly gave way; in March of the following year he died, after a short and not very painful illness, and was interred beside his forefathers in the family mausoleum at Hoddam. His death was felt as a personal loss by many in Edinburgh. It was as if a link with the past had been broken. His kindness and his chivalrous courtesy are still remembered by many.

His etchings are, perhaps, his most characteristic remains. They range from grave to gay,—now an historical portrait, now a sketch from one of Scott's ballads, now a Moorish lady singing to her guitar, a game-keeper and his dogs, a "Venus and Cupid" in the Dutch style, figures from Crabbe's poems, portraits and caricatures of friends. Probably the best known of them all, and one in which the humour is exquisite and inimitable, is "Queen Elizabeth Dancing." But there is the touch of genius upon them all,—something, as Scott said, between Hogarth and certain of those foreign masters who painted grotesque Temptations of St. Anthony and similar subjects.

The Man in the Iron Mask.

Innumerable as have been the theories broached from time to time in regard to the at once renowned and obscure mortal known popularly as the Man in the Iron Mask, they have always contradicted each other and themselves so frequently and so flatly, that the appearance of a work calculated to set the question finally at rest, may be fairly viewed as a subject for congratulation. M. Marius Topin, the author of the volume in question, after fully investigating the claims of the various persons, in turn suspected of being the mysterious prisoner, and disposing of those claims, proceeds to set forth his own theory, supported, for the most part, by minute and irrefragable evidence, or, failing such direct evidence, by arguments and inferences of singular cogency.

Following the example of Plutarch in his *Life of Demetrius Poliorcetes*, M. Topin begins his hero's life by referring to his death. We shall tread in his footsteps, and relate the circumstances as derived by M. Topin from Dujonca's contemporary manuscript account of the prisoners in the Bastille. On the afternoon of the 18th of September, 1678, the Sieur de St. Mars, who had lately been promoted from the governorship of the Islands of Ste. Marguerite, off the coast of Provence, to that of the Bastille, arrived at his new post, attended by an armed escort. He had travelled in a litter, in which, and by his side, sat a prisoner, whose face was hidden by a black velvet mask. During the whole of their long journey St. Mars had not for a moment lost sight of his charge; it was remarked that at meals the prisoner was made to sit with his back to the light, that he was forbidden even then to doff his mask, and that at night St. Mars slept by his side with loaded pistols within easy reach. Monsieur Topin adds, that at Palteau, a chateau belonging to St. Mars, where the party halted, a tradition of the mysterious prisoner's passage has been handed down from father to son, and still exists among the peasantry.

Five years afterwards, at nightfall on Tuesday, the 20th of November, 1703, a small knot of men hurried across the drawbridge of the Bastille to the cemetery of St. Paul's Church. The prisoner from Provence had fallen ill on the preceding Sunday. On the Monday the almoner of the Bastille had been called in, and had barely had time to shrive the dying man. In the register of the church the corpse was inscribed under the name of *Marchialy*. At the Bastille he had been known as "the prisoner from Provence." Absolute secrecy was maintained on the subject in the Bastille; its officers, however, had learnt the particulars from Dujonca, and, in the course of time, repeated them to their successors; thus it happened that the inmates of the prison still knew of this mystery of mysteries, when, in the first half of the eighteenth century, a number of

men of letters were confined there in succession. They, too, learnt the appalling tale, and lost no time in publishing it to the world; conjecture was, of course, rife, and numberless versions of the story succeeded each other. One difficulty, however, lay at the root of them all—for it was admitted at all hands that the captive, so jealously watched and hidden, must needs have been a man of importance; yet no known person of weight sufficient to warrant such precautions had, within memory of man, disappeared from the stage of public affairs in Europe.

Gradually, however, one version of the story seemed to supplant all others in the minds of men, partly on account of the extraordinary melodramatic interest which attached to it, and partly because it was not open to the objection to which we have just referred. Of the fifty-two writers, therefore, who in France alone dealt with the question, those were most eagerly listened to who adhered to this version, of which the fullest and clearest account is given in Grimm's *Correspondence*, whence we extract it. First, we are informed of the manner in which the secret was surprised. M. de la Borde, formerly a gentleman at the Court of King Louis XV., found, among the papers left by Marshal Richelieu, an original letter addressed to the Marshal by the Duchess of Modena, daughter of the Regent, Duke of Orleans. The letter begins in the following words, which are in cypher:—"Here, then, at last is this famous story; the trouble which I had to worm out the secret was inconceivable." She then proceeds to tell the story of the Man in the Iron Mask, as related by his guardian on his death-bed in much the following terms:—

During Anne of Austria's pregnancy, two shepherds came and asked to be admitted to the presence of the King (Louis XIII.), whom they told of a vision which they had had: the fact had been revealed to them that the Queen would bear twin princes, whose birth would entail a civil war, which would ruin the kingdom. The King immediately wrote to Cardinal Richelieu, who, in reply, begged him not to be disturbed; but to send him the two men, promising to secure their persons and send them to St. Lazare. Towards the close of the King's dinner the Queen was brought to bed of a son (Louis XIV.) in the presence of all the persons who, from their position, are entitled to be present at the confinements of Queens of France, and the usual *procès verbal* was drawn up.

Four hours later Madame Perronet, the Queen's midwife, came and told the King that the Queen was again in labour. He instantly sent for the Chancellor and hurried with him to the apartments of the Queen, who was delivered of a second son, sturdier and more blooming than her first-born. The birth was duly noted in a *procès verbal*, which was signed by the King, the Chancellor, Madame Perronet, the doctor, and a gentleman of the Court, who in time became guardian of the Man in the Iron Mask, and so was shut up in prison with him, as we shall see by the sequel.

The King himself, assisted by the Chancellor, drew up a form of oath, which he required all those who had been present at the second birth to take, binding themselves never to reveal this weighty secret, except in the event of the Dauphin's death; and he made them swear

never to speak of it, not even to each other. The child was consigned to the care of Mme. Perronet, who was desired to say that it had been confided to her by a lady belonging to the Court.

When the child was old enough to be made over to the care of men, it was entrusted to the same gentleman who had been present at its birth. He travelled to Dijon with his charge, and thence kept up a constant correspondence with the Queen-mother, with Cardinal Mazarin, and with the King. In his retirement he did not cease to behave like a courtier, for he treated the young Prince with all the deference which a courtier observes towards one who may one day be his master. This deferential tone, which the Prince was at a loss to account for in one whom he regarded as his father, led to frequent questions on his part as to his birth and position. The answers which he received were not of a nature to satisfy him. At length the young Prince asked his guardian for a portrait of the King (Louis XIV.); the guardian was disconcerted, and turned off the conversation. He had recourse to the same expedient as often as his pupil sought to solve a mystery to which he seemed daily to attach greater importance. The young man had an intrigue with a chamber-maid in the house; he entreated her to get him a portrait of the King: she refused at first, quoting the order which all the household had received, to give him nothing, save in the presence of their master. He persisted and she promised to do his bidding. On seeing the portrait he was much struck with his likeness to the King, went straight to his guardian, and renewed his usual questions, but in a manner more pressing and with greater assurance, and ended by again asking for the King's portrait. His guardian wished to elude the question. "You are deceiving me," said the Prince, "for here is the King's portrait, and a letter to you which has fallen into my hands has revealed the mystery, which it were vain in you to seek any longer to conceal. I am the King's brother, and desire to repair to Court without delay to be recognized, there to take the position which is my due." (It may be well here to mention that the guardian declared on his death-bed, that he had never been able to ascertain by what means the young Prince had obtained the letter; nor whether he opened a box in which all the letters were deposited which came from the King, the Queen, and the Cardinal, nor whether he had intercepted it.) He immediately imprisoned the Prince, and forwarded a messenger to St. Jean de Luz, where the Court then resided, for the purpose of negotiating the peace of the Pyrenees and the marriage of the King. The reply was a Royal order for the immediate removal of the Prince and of his guardian, who were conducted to the Isles Ste. Marguerite, and thence in time transferred to the Bastille, whither the Governor of the Isles Ste. Marguerite followed them.

M. de la Borde, who was for a long time in the confidence of Louis XV., has compared this story with the conversations which he had had with the King respecting the Man in the Iron Mask, and they tally in more than one particular. On his repeatedly expressing an ardent desire to be informed of the facts of this marvellous tale, the King would invariably answer: "I

am truly sorry for him, but his imprisonment was hurtful to none but himself, and was the means of preventing great calamities; but I am bound not to tell you the story;" and the King reminded La Borde of the curiosity which, from his earliest childhood, he had felt to know the tale of the Iron Mask; how he had always been told that he could only know when he came of age; that on the day of his coming of age he had asked to know it; that the courtiers, who besieged the door of his room, crowded round him with eager questions, to which he uniformly answered: "You can never be allowed to know the truth."

M. de la Borde further examined the registers of St. Lazare, but they do not go so far back as the birth of Louis XIV.

It is one of Ariosto's heroes, if we mistake not, who, in commending the excellence of his mare, dwells on her wondrous shape and qualities, and admits but one single defect in her, namely, that she is dead. In like manner the tale which we have just repeated, however consistent with itself and interesting in all its details, has but one drawback, namely, that there is not a word of truth in it. The great majority, in fact, of the writers who have dealt with the subject have developed a mythopœic faculty of so high an order as to tempt one to echo the saying of the Psalmist that all men are liars. Thus Voltaire, Soulavie, and their numberless colleagues in error, are each in turn so completely refuted by M. Topin that one cannot but pity their sorry plight, and contrast their lot with that of their luckier predecessors, the chroniclers of the middle ages. Happier far than they, for instance, was the painstaking Froissart, who boasts of having travelled all the way from Valenciennes to Bruges, and from Bruges to Middleburg in Holland, to confer with a Portuguese knight touching the affairs of his country; for having once taken all this trouble, and sifted and set down what seemed to him the truth, Froissart was not exposed to having his story impugned by any of those disintegrating processes with which modern criticism assails time-honoured myths. Still, fully alive as we may be to the unfair advantage possessed over us moderns by the mediæval writers, we must not imagine that the difficulties of intercommunication, and the absence, for the most part, of written testimony in their times, invariably enabled them to lie with impunity. Means occasionally existed of acquiring correct information which leave the feats of M. Topin on the one hand, and those of M. Reuter on the other, far in the background. Thus Froissart very gravely assures us of the miraculous manner in which the Lord of Corasse, living in his castle near Orthès, was informed of the affairs of Europe in general by a spirit named Orthon. On one occasion, for instance, that spirit seems to have had nothing better to do than to travel "sixty days' journey from Prague to Orthès" in a single night, for the sole purpose of informing the Lord of Corasse, who had neither knowledge of, nor interest in, the Bohemian capital, of what was passing there. For the benefit of such of our readers as have dealings with spirits, and might wish to engage his services, we may mention that in the daytime Orthon would assume various shapes, sometimes appearing in the disguise of two straws turning

and playing together on the floor, and that he was last seen in the shape of an immensely large and lean sow, standing in the courtyard of the castle. On this occasion a mistake occurred, which, we trust, may not be repeated by any one lucky enough in future to make his acquaintance; for the Lord of Corasse, taking him for a *bonâ fide* animal, had him worried by his hounds, when the sow, looking up at his lordship as he leant on the balcony of his window, uttered a loud cry and vanished, was never seen afterwards, *and the Lord of Corasse died in the very following year.*

Unable as we degenerate moderns unhappily are to depend with any certainty on the assistance of travelling goblins, communicative straws, and inspired swine, we must make the best of our opportunities, such as they are, and we feel we cannot have a safer or a better guide than M. Topin in unravelling the tangled skein of evidence in the matter of which this paper treats. Our limited space does not admit of our following him through the arguments by which he refutes the various theories which have been broached in connection with the subject. We shall therefore confine ourselves to giving a brief sketch of the story to which he adheres, and which he tells with great clearness and force.

The story opens about the year 1676. The prestige of Louis XIV. was as yet unimpaired by the reverses which clouded the close of his career. At no time, in fact, had he cherished more ambitious schemes, and at none did they seem more likely to succeed. Yielding to the fatal attraction which has so often induced French rulers to interfere in the affairs of Italy, he was casting about for the best and surest means of obtaining a solid and permanent footing in that country. The state of Italy, divided into petty States, with a people sunk in sloth and corruption, Governments timid and venal, and Princes weak and dissolute, invited the interference of powerful and scheming neighbours.

Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, had lately died, leaving as his successor that very Duke of Savoy who was destined to exercise on the affairs of Europe an influence so vast, so disproportionate to the size of his realm, and so baneful to the interests of Louis. As yet, however, this Duke was a mere child, left under the guardianship of his mother, and the Government of Piedmont held a far inferior position; for the Duchess, by nature weak and vacillating, was rendered all the more so, perhaps, from her position as the ruler of a small State at the very threshold of a mighty neighbour, and as an inexperienced woman environed by astute, unscrupulous, and often hostile statesmen. Louis was already master of the fortress of Pignerol, and it was argued that if he were able to secure the possession of that of Casale, Piedmont, lying as it does between those two strongholds, would be wholly at his mercy; thus he would acquire at once a means and a motive for interference in Italy, leading not improbably to French predominance in that country, if not in the end to downright conquest. Casale was the capital of the Marquesate of Montferrat, a dependency of the Duchy of Mantua. That Duchy was governed by Charles IV. of the House of Gonzaga, a frivolous and needy Prince, who passed most of his time in the gambling-houses of Venice,

was always in difficulties, and likely to be at the beck of the highest bidder. The rivals of France in Italy were, as usual in those days, the Spaniards and Imperialists, and the utmost circumspection was requisite to baffle their vigilance if the scheme of acquiring Casale were seriously entertained. In the Abbé d'Estrades, his Ambassador at Venice, the King of France possessed a fitting tool for the work in hand, for that functionary was of a restless and ambitious turn, and bent on pushing his own fortunes in furthering those of his master, by some bold and successful stroke. The purchase of Casale seemed to d'Estrades perfectly feasible, and he was not long in settling on the person most likely to meet his overtures on the subject in a friendly spirit.

Count Matthioly, the man whom d'Estrades selected for the purpose, had been Secretary of State to the Duke of Mantua's predecessor, had wormed himself into the confidence of his present master, and was straining every nerve to regain the office which he had once held. Like d'Estrades himself, therefore, he was bent on rendering his master some signal service, such as would be likely to entail the attainment of his own wishes; and he well knew that he could do the Duke no greater favour than by supplying him with money, and thus pandering to his pleasures and his vices. No two men, therefore, seemed better qualified under the circumstances to bring the question to the issue desired by the French Government than the negotiators whom we have described.

Before, however, directly attacking Matthioly on the subject, the wary Frenchman sent one Giuliani, a contributor to a newspaper, who, owing to his occupation, could well move about the country without exciting suspicion, to watch and to sound him at Verona. Giuliani was not long in ascertaining Matthioly's aversion to the Spaniards, from whom he had never been able to obtain more than empty promises, and the two soon came to an understanding; the Duke of Mantua was as easily persuaded, and a meeting was accordingly agreed upon between him and d'Estrades. It was arranged that this meeting should take place at Venice during the Carnival, when every one, including even the Doge, the senators, and the Papal Nuncio, went abroad masked, and there seemed, therefore, no possibility of suspicion attaching to the plotters. Thus, strangely enough, this long and eventful negotiation began as it ended, in a masquerade; but little could the unhappy Matthioly have divined in what sort of masquing it would terminate!

The Duke of Mantua and d'Estrades met on the 13th March, 1678, as if by chance, in the open street at midnight after a ball, and there, in disguise, safely discussed the preliminaries. In the following month of October, Matthioly and Giuliani, after successfully eluding the vigilance of foreign spies, and pretending a journey to Switzerland, started for Paris, where they signed a treaty, the conditions of which were the following:—1st. That the Duke of Mantua should admit French troops into Casale. 2ndly. That he should be appointed Commander-in-Chief of any army which Louis might send into Italy; and 3rdly. That when the provisions of the treaty were carried out, a sum of 100,000 crowns should be paid to him.

On the signature of the treaty, Matthioly was received in a private audience by Louis XIV. He was treated with the most flattering marks of distinction; in memory of his journey, the King offered him a valuable diamond, and a sum of 400 double louis, and further promised that, on the ratification of the treaty, a much larger sum should be paid to him, that his son should be appointed page at the French Court, and that his brother should receive a valuable living.

Never, as M. Topin observes, had any intrigue been more skilfully devised, nor had a fairer prospect of success. The Powers with whose interests the scheme clashed, were still in utter ignorance of its existence, the contracting parties fully agreed in every point, and the negotiators on both sides, to all appearance, equally interested in its fulfilment.

Notwithstanding this, it is an undoubted fact that two months after Matthioly's journey to Paris, all the Governments interested in the failure of the project, namely, those of Turin, Madrid, Vienna, and Venice, were fully informed of every particular; and they were so owing to the fact that they had at various times received detailed statements on the subject from the principal agent in the intrigue, Count Matthioly himself. His motive for this conduct it is, indeed, hard to guess. M. Topin supposes that, although willing in the first instance to sell his country to France, Matthioly may perhaps afterwards have had qualms of conscience, and, moved by a tardy patriotism, may have wished to undo his own work by betraying the plot while it was yet time. This conjecture, we own, seems to rest on no solid foundation. In the first place, patriotism was not in vogue among the Italian statesmen of those days. Secondly, the state of affairs in the Peninsula was such, that in withdrawing his country from the clutches of one spoiler, he must have known that he was merely placing her at the mercy of another; for Italy's chains were then so firmly riveted that a change in her condition implied no more than a change of gaolers, and thus she would pass from the tyranny and cupidity of one foreigner to those of another,

Per servir sempre, o vincitrice o vinta.

Less improbable does it seem that the urgent wants of the rapacious and needy gamester whom he served obliged Matthioly to sell his secret to any one likely to pay for it, and in some such reason as this we must find the key to his strange, reckless, and suicidal conduct. To what extent he was his master's *âme damnée*, may easily be gathered from the foregoing; that he did not fully trust his master we may perceive from the fact that he withheld from him the original documents touching the negotiations and kept them concealed; that in the end he was sacrificed to his master's exigencies as well as to Louis's resentment, we can not well doubt, even if we do not attach importance to the facts that Charles and Louis were afterwards fully reconciled, and that the sudden illness and death of Matthioly in the Bastille coincided somewhat ominously with the Duke of Mantua's visit to Paris. Distrust of each other, moreover, was an element which, among negotiators constituted as they must have been, was likely to enter largely into the incentives which determined their

conduct; for it must be recollected that Louis, who, as regards common honour and honesty, appears of all parties to the least disadvantage on the occasion, had himself not scrupled to break almost every international engagement into which he had entered; that his character, therefore, for good faith can hardly have stood high from the manner in which he had observed the stipulations of the Treaties of the Pyrenees and of Aix.

The Duchess of Savoy was the first person whom Matthioly informed of his dealings with France. On the 31st of December—that is, just twenty-three days after the signature of the treaty,—she received from Matthioly all the original documents connected with the negotiation, of which she kept copies. Fully alive to the fact that of all Italian governments her own had most to fear from Louis's resentment, and concluding that the other governments interested had been equally apprised, she hastened to inform him of what was passing. He was thunderstruck on receiving these tidings, which reached him in February, 1679, for all the arrangements made for the seizure of Casale were in full progress. Baron d'Asfeld had started for Venice, empowered to exchange the ratifications of the treaty. Troops had been secretly assembled at Briançon, ready to march at a moment's notice. Catinat himself, who at that time only held the rank of brigadier, but was already known as a distinguished officer, was hurried off under escort in the disguise of a prisoner to Pignerol, where he sojourned under a false name; everything, in short, was ready, when the signal for action was unexpectedly delayed, owing to the unaccountable treachery of Matthioly.

Meanwhile that arch-deceiver perceiving the fruitlessness, as far as he was himself concerned, of his overtures to the Duchess of Savoy, had lost no time in informing the Governments of Vienna, Venice, and Madrid of the whole matter, and had thus rendered success on the part of France an impossibility. The King, on the other hand, ignorant as he was of these further disclosures, did not as yet lose all hope of carrying his point; thinking Matthioly's conduct might be only a beginning of treachery as it were, he did not even apprise d'Estrades of the state of the case, and trusted that all might yet be well.

D'Estrades, who had been moved from the legation at Venice to that of Turin, continued, in the meantime, to meet with evasive and unsatisfactory replies to his overtures from the Mantuan Government; the negotiations were delayed by them on the flimsiest pretexts. Perplexing intelligence of the least reassuring nature continued to reach d'Estrades from various parts of Italy, till an event of no little significance occurred which confirmed his worst suspicions. Baron d'Asfeld, on his way to Increa to exchange ratifications with Matthioly, had been arrested by the Spanish Governor of the Milanese, and was kept a close prisoner. Louis, however, did not as yet wholly lose heart, and Catinat received orders to take the place of d'Asfeld. Still travelling under a feigned name, he and St. Mars, the Governor of Pignerol, likewise in disguise, made their way to the appointed rendezvous, where Matthioly was to have met them, without, however, finding him there. After various misadventures, during

which they narrowly escaped capture, they were glad to make good their retreat to Pignerol, without, of course, bringing back with them the deed of cession, the obtaining of which had been the object of their errand.

From that moment all doubt of Matthioly's treachery vanished from d'Estrades' mind, and he was the first to propose a plan for capturing the traitor. Matthioly still attempted to amuse d'Estrades with sham negotiations, but the latter had by this time fully ascertained that the arrest of d'Asfeld was due to Matthioly, and that Matthioly still withheld the original documents from the Duke of Mantua. D'Estrades, however, did not cease to negotiate with Matthioly, using, however, the utmost care not to let him know how fully informed he was of his perfidy. He accordingly sent Giuliani to him, saying that if the Duke of Mantua were still of the same mind as regards Casale, the King of France would be quite willing to continue the negotiation for the surrender of the fortress. Matthioly complained that he had spent all the money at his command in bribes at the Court of Mantua, with a view to bringing about the result desired by the King of France. D'Estrades thereupon promised that he should be paid certain sums by Catinat, who had been entrusted with them by the King, his master. So greedy for money was Matthioly, that he eagerly pressed d'Estrades to lose no time in bringing about a meeting with Catinat, and Tuesday, the 2nd of May, was the day appointed.

So wholly lulled were his suspicions, so dead was he to all sense of his danger, that he seemed stricken with a mental blindness fully as strange as his former shrewdness, and hurried heedlessly on to a doom which will make him a by-word for all that is abjectly and irrecoverably wretched in this life. The Abbé d'Estrades tells, with no little complacency, how completely he duped and ensnared his victim, how he called for him at six in the morning on the appointed day, and carried him in his own carriage towards the place of meeting; how the rains had so swollen the River Guisiola that it had broken part of the bridge they were to cross; how Matthioly helped with his own hands to repair the damage, and worked zealously on till the bridge was passable on foot; and how they then left the carriage and hurried forward through muddy lanes to the place of assignation. There they found Catinat awaiting them; he managed matters so well that no one appeared on the spot but himself; he showed them into a neighbouring house where they could confer unobserved; here d'Estrades gradually led Matthioly on to confess what he had heard him say some days before, namely, that he had in his possession all the original documents connected with the negotiations. Matthioly added that the Duke of Mantua had often attempted, but in vain, to obtain them, that he only possessed copies, and that the originals were in the care of his (Matthioly's) wife in a nunnery at Bologna. At this stage of the conference d'Estrades judged it best to retire, and as soon as he had left, Matthioly's arrest was effected without the least difficulty.

Among the papers found on the captive, those emanating from the Court of Versailles, were not included; but on being threatened with torture and death the unhappy man confessed that they were in Padua, stowed

away in a place known to his father alone. He was then made to write a letter by dictation to his father, in no way alluding to his present state, but begging him to make the papers over to Giuliani, the bearer of the letter. The elder Matthioly, wholly ignorant of the fact that Giuliani was in French pay, unsuspectingly handed to him the precious documents, which d'Estrades lost no time in forwarding to Versailles.

On learning Matthioly's arrest, Louis seems to have behaved with characteristic presence of mind: instantly abandoning all thought of acquiring Casale, he recalled the troops collected at Briançon, peremptorily demanded and easily obtained the release of d'Asfeld by the Spanish Government, and caused a report to be spread that Matthioly was dead.

"Il faudra," wrote Louis to d'Estrades, "il faudra que personne ne sache ce que cet homme est devenu." The order was strictly obeyed. The unhappy man's family dispersed in silence and sorrow. In their pedigree the date of Matthioly's death is left blank. His wife, the widow of a man who was destined to survive her, retired broken-hearted to the very convent whither seventeen years before Matthioly had come to wed her; his father dragged on a wretched existence for some years longer at Padua, not knowing whether to bewail the death of a beloved son, or still to believe in his existence. Harrowing as this state of doubt must have been to them, none of his kindred dared to set on foot inquiries which were almost certain to be fruitless and might possibly have been dangerous. M. Topin traces Matthioly to Pignerol, to the Islands of Ste. Marguerite, and finally, as we have seen, to the Bastille.

In the despatches addressed by the French Government to Matthioly's gaolers, he is after a time no longer mentioned by name, and is known by the pseudonym of "Le Sieur de Lestang;" and M. Topin shows that the name of *Marchialy*, under which his funeral was entered in the register of St. Paul's Church, was a mere corruption of the name Matthioly, very likely to occur in a foreign country, and at a time when proper names were spelled with a carelessness unknown in these days.

Thus was Louis XIV. revenged on the first man who had ever thwarted him in one of his great designs. His success, indeed, in punishing the culprit was in its way as complete as had been his failure to compass the object of his intrigues. This very success, however, has left a blot upon his fame as indelible as any which attaches to that of the other actors in this detestable episode, from which Catinat's name alone emerges unsullied. We feel, in fact, that in dealing with this whole matter we have been dwelling, as it were, in a tainted atmosphere; for the hand of time which lifts so many veils has seldom revealed a scene of fraud, chicane, and relentless tyranny, at once so nauseous and so appalling. Let us hope that such depravity among the foremost of mankind is henceforth an impossibility; let us hope that the present generation have a better right than the Pharisee of the Gospel to rejoice that they are not like even unto these men.

"After Many Days."

I.

In autumn's silent twilight, sad and sweet,
O love, no longer mine, alone I stand;
Listening, I seem to hear dear phantom feet
Pass by me down the golden wave-worn strand:
I think of things that were and things that be,
I hear the soft low ripples of the sea
That to my thoughts responsive music beat.

II.

My heart is very sad to-night and chill,
But hush'd in awe, as his who turns and feels
A mournful rapture through his being thrill,
When music, sweet and slumb'rous, softly steals
Down the deep calm of some cathedral nave;
Then swells and throbs and breaks as does a wave,
And slowly ebbs, and all again is still.

III.

And is it only five years since, O love,
That we in this old place stood side by side,
Where in the twilight once again I move?
Is this the same shore wash'd by the same tide?
My heart recalls the past a little space,
The sweet and the irrevocable days;
I knew not then how bitter life might prove.

IV.

I lov'd you then, and shall love till I die;
Your way of life is fair, it should be so,
And I am glad, though in dark years gone by
Hard thoughts of you I had; but now I know
A fairer and a softer path was meet
For treading of your dainty maiden feet:
Your life must blossom 'neath a summer sky.

V.

The twilight, like a sleep, creeps on the day,
And like dark dreams the night creeps on that sleep;
If you should come again in the old way
And look from pensive tender eyes and deep
Upon me, as you look'd in days of old—
If my hand should again of yours take hold,
How should I feel, and what thing should I say?

VI.

Ah, sweet days flown shall never come again,
That happy summer time shall not return
When we two stood beside this peaceful main,
And saw at eve the rising billows yearn
With passion to the moon, and heard afar,
Across the waves, and 'neath the first warm star,
From ships at sea some sweet remember'd strain.

VII.

I can recall the day when first we met,
And how the burning summer sunlight fell
Across the sea; nor, love, do I forget
How, underneath that summer noontide spell,
We saw afar the white-sail'd vessels glide
As phantom ships upon a waveless tide,
Whose shining calm no breezes come to fret.

VIII.

And shall I blame you, sweet, because you chose
A softer path of life than mine could be?
I keep our secret here, and no man knows
What pass'd five years ago 'twixt you and me—
Two loves begotten at the self-same time,
When that gold summer tide was in its prime:
One love lives yet, and one died with the rose.

IX.

I work and live and take my part in things,
And so my life goes on from day to day;
Fruitless the summers, seedless all the springs,
To him who feels December one with May:
The night is not more dreary than the sun,
Not sadder is the twilight, dim and dun,
Than dawn that, still returning, shines and sings.

X.

Fed with wet scent of hills, through growing shades,
To the white water's edge the wind moans down;
The lapping tide steals on, while daylight fades,
And fills the caves with shells and seaweed brown.
Ah, wild sea-beaten coast, more dear to me
Than fairest scenes of that fair land could be
Where warm Italian suns steep happy glades!

XI.

Farewell, familiar scene, for I ascend
The jagged path that led me to the shore;
Farewell to cliff, cave, inlet—each a friend;
My parting steps shall visit ye no more:
Dear are ye all when soft light steals through gloom,
Here had my joy its birth—here found its tomb—
Here love began, and here one love had end.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

La Bruyère.

One day, in the year 1687, a plain-featured, studious gentleman, something more than forty years of age, entered the shop of Michallet, the bookseller and publisher, at the corner of the Rue St. Jacques, in Paris—a place where he was often wont to lounge, sometimes turning over the leaves of new publications, sometimes amusing himself with the childish prattle of the bookseller's little daughter—and drawing from his pocket a manuscript, offered it to the man of business across the counter, saying, "I don't know whether you will find it answer to publish this, but in case of success all the profits shall go to my little friend here." The book answered so well that eight editions appeared within the space of seven years. Michallet's daughter married in the course of time, and had a handsome dowry.

We talk, at the present day, of "sensation" novels and "sensation" articles. Seldom was a more pungent sensation made by any literary concoction than by that of *Les Caractères de Théophraste, avec les Caractères ou les Mœurs de ce Siècle, par M. Jean de la Bruyère*, which was presented to the world under the circumstances aforesaid.

The work consisted of two parts: first, a translation of the moral observations of Theophrastus, the Greek satirist, introduced by a preface, containing some marked allusions to modern manners; secondly, a series of original maxims or aphorisms, and of characters or "portraits," representing different types of character. The novelty of the book consisted scarcely so much in its conception as in its execution. The manufacture of "maxims" had long been a favourite fashion in the polite world of France. Those curious in literary genealogies may trace it, in the first instance, from the Italian Guicciardini, after whose time it was naturalized in France by the two Corbinellis, and imitated by De Retz, La Rochefoucauld, Madame de Sablé, and numerous other *beaux esprits*, whose sententious observations on the motives and varieties of human action fill a considerable space in a Louis Quatorze library. Readers of Madame de Sevigné will readily remember the jokes bandied about between her and her daughter relative to "*les belles maximes*" so enthusiastically cried up by their friend Corbinelli the younger. The portraits, again, with which La Bruyère's reflections were interspersed, were by no means a novel idea on his part. The romances of the Scuderi school had started the notion of describing existing personages under feigned names in a high-flying romantic style; and Mdlle. de Montpensier, thirty years before the date of La Bruyère's book, had amused herself and her ladies, in one of her winter courts at Champigny, by giving a satirical turn and a

distinct embodiment to the practice of mutual character-painting. But the work now on Michallet's counter exhibited a combination of maxims and portraits in a form unusually methodical and purpose-like, in a tone of peculiarly just, as well as pungent satire, and in a style whose admirable qualities, concise yet varied, philosophical yet sympathetic, playful and severe, pathetic and ludicrous by turns, at once claimed for it the high rank it has ever since held among French classics.

At once curiosity was alive; and scarcely had the book made its first impression on the mind of the public, when various "keys," or explanations, were put forth by unauthorised hands, professing to solve the riddles it had suggested. It became a universal theme of conversation. All were eager to make the first happy guess; all were bent on purchasing copies of the first edition, lest in a prudent fit the author should be induced to curtail his allusions in another. But, on the contrary, the success of his publication encouraged him, when, in the course of time, a third edition was called for, to enlarge it by the addition of no less than 380 new "characters" and remarks. The key-makers, were of course, encouraged too; and their indiscreet explanations, as time went on, were no small annoyance to La Bruyère, who disowned, though he could not always absolutely deny, them.

And now, who was the author in question? this cunning gentleman, who glided about, making his notes on human frailties, and sketching the motley personages whom he encountered on the thoroughfares of Parisian life? He had given his name, and there was no mystery about him. He might be seen any fine day issuing from the stately hotel which, occupying the present site of the Odéon, &c., at the north-east corner of the Luxembourg Palace, was, in those days, the town residence of the Prince de Condé; thence wending his way to Michallet's bookshop in the adjacent street, or planting himself under a certain chestnut-tree in the Luxembourg Gardens, there to listen to the quidnuncs who spent their time in hashing up the daily provender for the *Mercure Galant*. But he was not one of those whom court fame delighted to honour, and the *beau monde* of the brilliant capital were content to let him pass. In truth it has scarcely ever happened that a writer, whose work has attained such very great contemporary celebrity as that of La Bruyère, has been so little described or remembered in respect of his personal character and history. What enhances the anomaly in his case is, that at the period when he wrote, the genius of gossip was at its highest flow in France; he himself lived in a particularly conspicuous coterie; and, moreover, the nature of his literary performance, while it dealt entirely with the foibles of his fellow-creatures, exposed him to their revengeful criticism in return. The ordinary account of him to be found in biographical dictionaries, is not only very meagre, but is full of mistakes. Neither the year nor the place of his birth are stated with accuracy, and the salient fact of his life, that he was tutor to the Duc de Bourbon, grandson of the great Condé, is misconstrued into the assertion that he was tutor to the Duke of

Burgundy, grandson of Louis XIV. The significance of the mistake in his case happens to be very great; the mistake itself probably arose partly from ignorance or forgetfulness of the circumstance that "M. le Duc," *the* Duke par eminence, was a title belonging to the eldest son of "M. le Prince," *i.e.* the Prince of Condé, and not to the Dauphin's son, who, though in the line of direct descent from the Crown, was only "M. le Duc de Bourgogne;" partly, also, from the fact that, for a short time under Bossuet, La Bruyère did aid in the education of the Dauphin himself.

The maxims and "portraits" of the "ingenious M. la Bruyère" were much read and imitated by our own moralists of the Augustan age; but no curiosity seems to have been felt about the writer, until the modern passion for retrospective research has thrown certain able French critics on his track. The hints of M. Jal, M. St. Beuve, and others, have been diligently gathered up by M. Edouard Fourrier, who also, by his independent researches among contemporary authorities, has thrown original light on the subject. In taking his work on *La Comédie de la Bruyère* for our guide as to facts and incidents, we shall make it our endeavour to bring out some main features of the connection between the character of La Bruyère's work and the circumstances of his position.

But a general criticism of *Les Caractères* is beyond our beat. We can only recommend that those who are already familiar with its pages should read them over again, with the light of the biographical relations here suggested; and that those who may have been hitherto deterred from perusing the book under the impression that it was old-fashioned and dull, should speedily make acquaintance with one of the brightest literary productions of the age of Pascal and Molière, and one of the best examples of French style that even our own age could imitate.

The author was born in the year 1645, in the old city of Paris, in the vicinity of the towers of Notre Dame. His family belonged to the bourgeoisie, and had been staunch adherents of the League in the time of the Civil Wars. When Henry IV. effected his triumphant entry into Paris, Mathieu La Bruyère, an apothecary by profession, and his son, who had been an active lieutenant under the Provisional Government of the *Seize*, had to fly for their safety. They went first to Antwerp, then to Naples, and are supposed to have helped, at a distance, in preparing the murderous plot of Ravaillac. Under the Regency of Marie de Medicis, they returned to Paris. Both were men of some literary talent. The younger had a son, Louis, who held a financial post in the capital, and was the father of four children, of whom Jean, the author of the *Caractères*, was either the eldest or the second. His early education was conducted at the Oratory. This fact, it seems, was first unearthed by M. St. Beuve, from a manuscript in the Imperial Library. It has important bearings on the interpretation of La Bruyère's personal history, and is in harmony with the known circumstances of his parentage. For the French congregation of the Oratory, founded in 1610 by the Cardinal de Berulle, took up its position at once as a powerful rival of the Jesuits; and as these last,

with all their sinister and subtle influence, aimed at directing the routine forces of society, and the court party, so the Oratorians identified themselves with a certain spirit of political contumacy and intellectual daring, which was the residue, in Parisian minds, of the great League ferment. Sénault, president of the congregation at the date of young La Bruyère's noviciate, was the son of one who had been conspicuous in the civil government of the *Seize* at the same time with La Bruyère's grandfather. The rival orders pursued different systems of classical training with their pupils; the Jesuits founding their instruction almost entirely on the Latin language and literature; the Oratorians, in this respect like the Jansenists,—to whom at one time, indeed, they made some approaches in theological matters,—making Greek of at least equal importance. Thus Corneille and Bossuet, pupils of the Jesuit schools, knew scarcely anything of Greek except what they acquired for themselves in their riper years; while Racine, the Port-Royalist, and La Bruyère, the Oratorian scholars, were both early proficients in it. In one of his few extant letters, La Bruyère speaks of himself as studying Thucydides, Strabo, and Polybius. In 1661 he took his degree of licentiate at the University of Orleans. He then seems to have been employed, as we have said, under Bossuet, in the historical education of the Dauphin; and it is conjectured that it was owing to Bossuet's influence, and in payment of his services as preceptor, that he was appointed, in 1673, to the sinecure office of Treasurer of France for the generality of Caen. In 1676, or, as some say, two years previously, he was made preceptor to the grandson of the Prince de Condé. This also, it is likely, was at the suggestion of Bossuet, whose opinion in matters of education was much consulted by the different branches of the royal family. To the household of the Condés he remained attached for the rest of his life. When his pupil, commonly known, after his grandfather's death, as M. le Duc, had outgrown his tuition, La Bruyère continued to occupy a position as literary hanger-on at the court of the parsimonious Henri-Jules, Prince de Condé, with the titular post and small pay of "gentleman to M. le Duc," and the privilege of prefixing a "de" to his bourgeois patronymic. He had voluntarily resigned his office of Treasurer in Normandy in the year 1687; a few months after which resignation he published *Les Caractères*. In 1693 he obtained the honour of a seat in the Academy, but not without much opposition, and after he had twice offered himself unsuccessfully. In 1696 he died.

These are the bare outward facts of his life. The partial filling in of the framework, which we owe to the zeal of recent inquirers, is derived from scattered hints of contemporary record, as well as from casual indications in his own work. One thing seems clear, and it partly accounts for the obscurity which has so long hung over his personal history, that La Bruyère was a man who shunned notoriety, expressly for the sake of being able to perform his self-chosen office of satirist with less embarrassment. He wrote very few letters, and those on casual subjects: he made no

demonstrative friendships. The same spirit of reserve has been remarked in other social satirists; in La Rochefoucauld, in Molière, and in the ideal *Spectator* of Addison. It was a matter of prudence. Those who throw stones do well not to live in houses of glass. But the scanty glimpses we have of his demeanour show that his moods were various, as must have been his intellectual sympathies. His conversation at times was rich and abundant; a other times rare and scanty. Boileau, writing to Racine, says of him, "He is a very worthy man, to whom nothing would be wanting if only nature had made him as agreeable as he wishes to be." "In spite of his ugliness, the ladies seek his society," said another chance commentator. With his masters, the Condé princes, who possessed eminently what he himself calls "the extreme tendency of the great to laugh at the expense of others," he appeared sometimes in the undignified character of a butt. Valincourt, in replying to an inquirer thirty years after La Bruyère's death, gives this description of him: "He was a good sort of man, essentially, but the fear of appearing pedantic had thrown him into an opposite absurdity which it is difficult to define; so that all the time he was in the household of M. le Duc, in whose service he died, people made game of him." Yet, for his honesty, his disinterestedness, his pathos, his humour, his religious earnestness, his indulgent benevolence, we must accept the evidence of his eloquent words, his high-toned sentiments, and the sterling facts that have been recorded of him.

Passing from these indications of the manner of man our philosopher was, we turn to consider who were the patrons and what was the *entourage* with which circumstances had allied him. When the Duc d'Aumale gives to the world the continuation of his lives of the Condés, he will have to present us, in the contemporaries of Louis XIV., with a portrait-gallery of as whimsical potentates as ever wielded social authority in a showy and cultivated era. An hereditary spirit of opposition from the first Louis, the Huguenot chieftain, downwards, boundless self-will and caprice, an extravagant love of pleasure and of display, joined to the meanest parsimony, shameless habits of dissipation, combined with a certain restless energy and a genuine love of literature and science, such were the elements which mixed in the composition of these eccentric beings, whose sphere revolved in minor splendour round the central sun of the Grand Monarque. The "Great Condé"—Prince Louis II.—was head of the house during the first ten years of La Bruyère's connection with it. The military fame of this hero gave him a consideration in the country second only to that of the King himself. He had retired from war's alarms after the Peace of Nimeguen to rest on his laurels, a "César oisif," as Fontenelle called him, and indulge the taste for intellectual pursuits which he had always carried within him. He was dignified with honours, rewards, and with the applause of all the nation: but his cousin, the King, could never heartily forgive the contumacy of his early life, the daring disobedience of the *Frondeur*. Nor was the *frondeur* spirit by any means dead within Condé's breast. He loved to make his princely residence at Chantilly and his Paris hotel rivals of

Versailles and Marly in literary credit, in festive splendour, and in social resort. Condé was a great collector of books ; and was fond of dabbling in physical science ; but his striking abilities in war were not supplemented by any real superiority in social talent or statesmanship, and his mind decayed in vigour during the latter years of his life. Though arbitrary in temper, a cruel husband, and a capricious master, he was not without sensibility, which he manifested towards his son and grandson in an especial degree. His son, Henri-Jules, Duc d'Enghien, was the darling of his heart. He loved his society, trusted him in the business of his house, and was wretched when danger assailed him. Madame de Sévigné relates how the hero, who never trembled when the enemies' guns were pointed at his own breast, would be tormented with anxiety whenever his son took the field. His death was caused by a hurried journey to Fontainebleau, to attend upon the Duchess de Bourbon in the small-pox, and prevent her husband, his grandson, from exposing himself to the infection. A rather remarkable trait of his candid temper has been preserved by La Bruyère : " On lui a entendu dire *Je fuyois* avec la même grace qu'il disoit *Nous les battîmes.*"

Henri-Jules, the hero's son, has had remorseless delineators in Madame de Montpensier, to whom he was a suitor in early life, in the Duc de S. Simon, and in the Marquis de Lassay, who, being married to the natural daughter of this Prince, spent great part of his life in the Condé circle. A small, thin, eager man, restless, capricious, and passionate even to insanity, keeping all around him in a ferment with his changes of place and humour, insatiable in his curiosity about trifles, dark and suspicious in his dealings with others, without affection, generosity, or gratitude for any human being, associating chiefly with his valets, and yet, when he chose, irresistible in the grace and fascination with which he could play the courtier or the host, and abounding in penetration, wit, taste, and fancy : such a being does this scion of the Bourbons stand out to us on the kaleidoscope canvas of the Siècle Louis Quatorze. Unlike his father, he possessed considerable ability for everything *except* for war. If he had a specialty in his talent, it was for organizing and adorning the outward shows of life. Chantilly was the romance of his soul. What Versailles was to Louis XIV., that Chantilly was to the Condés,—and more, for they had something of the poetry of genius in their composition, which the King had not. Day by day Henri-Jules might be seen walking through the grounds, followed by a troop of secretaries, to whom he dictated the scenic transformations which commended themselves to his mental vision. In his last moments, when all Christian men desired that his soul should be occupied with more solemn thoughts, Chantilly—" ses délices," as S. Simon emphatically terms it—was still the topic of his failing speech, and he exhorted his son concerning the fulfilment of his schemes for the embellishment of this paradise of earth, while the baffled priest stood silent at his couch. His behests were accomplished, not by his son, however, who died only a year after him, but by his grandson, that Duc de Bourbon who was Prime Minister

of France under Louis XV., and who, not less fierce and dissolute than his predecessors, lavished more show and wealth on Chantilly than even his predecessors had done.

The eccentricities of Henri-Jules during the latter part of his life amounted to derangement. It was whispered that a horrible lycanthropic mania had got possession of him, and the remoter apartments of Chantilly would echo with sounds like those of wild animals. Then he fancied himself dead; and his physician, Finot, in order to prevent him from actually killing himself by starvation, had to invent tales of dead men who, in their exanimate condition, could still perform the function of mastication. But this worst phase of the petty despot's existence did not set in till after La Bruyère's death. While the philosopher continued an inmate of his household, he displayed, along with his imperious and unhappy temper, some qualities calculated to recommend his society to a man of genius. And he had a familiar friend in La Rochefoucauld.

Of the Duc de Bourbon, La Bruyère's pupil, the *Lucile* to whom he addresses his profound religious meditations in the concluding chapter of *Les Caractères*, we have descriptions from S. Simon and from Madame de Caylus. "He was considerably smaller than the smallest men," says S. Simon, had a big head, a countenance "qui faisoit peur," a yellow complexion, and impetuous manners. Though furious and dissipated, he seems to have possessed practical ability, and some justice and generosity of soul; and S. Simon testifies to his displaying the results of "an excellent education." He was married when a mere lad to Mdlle. de Nantes, a mere child, one of the King's daughters by Madame de Montespan. Clever, witty, and spiteful when she grew up, this princess queened it at Chantilly and at St. Maur, fancifully called "Mauritanie," her husband's château, where he loved to exercise the landscape-gardening passion of his family, as well as the taste for literary discussion which he shared in common with his wife.

Such were the successive chiefs of the great House to which La Bruyère's days were given: "les Altesses à qui je suis," to use his own expression. To form an idea of what were the ordinary conditions of retainership in such a service, it may not be amiss to glance at the pathetic description of one who knew them well, the Marquis de Lassay:

"To speak always to your princely masters as to sick people, telling them only such things as are pleasant for them to hear, never to be off your guard, but to be always complaisant and respectful, whatever the state of your own humour or health may be; to bear with the insolence and get involved in the petty intrigues of their valets; never to expect from the great themselves any kindness or favour, save when one happens to be actively useful to them; and all this as life wears on, and *liberty and easy-chairs become necessary to one's* happiness; such conditions," says this veteran expert, "does life wear to the hangers-on of a petty court." And he adds, impressively, "Il y a trop d'inégalité dans un tel commerce pour qu'il soit aimable."

St. Beuve has remarked that La Bruyère must have derived invaluable profit, as an observer, from being closely connected with this family of brilliant gifts and strong peculiarities. He himself calls Chantilly "l'écueil des mauvais ouvrages," and he may occasionally have been saved, by the keen criticism of his masters, from solecisms in matter or style. But the suggestion of M. Fournier that the young Duchesse de Bourbon had a direct share in the merits of his work is in the highest degree improbable; for it must be remembered that, at the time the first edition was put forth, this lively lady was but fourteen years old; and, however witty and satirical nature may have made her, it must have been a very precocious damsel indeed who, at such an age, could mould the expressions of a clever writer. It was possible, no doubt, that she might have exercised some influence over the later recasts of his work; but even when the last appeared she was barely twenty.

That the personal qualities of the Condé princes should find their record in the pages of so sharp-sighted a domestic moralist, was, of course, to be expected; although that they should be so frequently and freely brought forward, argues either an odd blindness of perception on their part, or, what is more likely, a daring and whimsical contempt of the ordinary regard to human approbation. May it not have been this last quality which, in spite of other drawbacks, attached La Bruyère to their service, and made him feel more at ease and lord of his own utterances with them than he could have been if bound, with the courtiers of a more exalted sphere, to the most undeviating flattery of the ruling presence? Still it required tact and a certain science of sarcasm to prevent his thrusts from striking too home. Thus his strokes of satire are often dispersed and mingled among other irrelevant traits, and often disguised in strangely involved ambiguities; and the student of the *Caractères* has his discernment smartly tasked when hunting up a bit of the Great Condé here, and of Henri-Jules there, and of the younger princes and duchesses in various hints more or less distinctly traceable. The character of *Emile*, in the chapter headed "Du Mérite Personnel," is, no doubt, intended for the Great Condé, partly by way of direct description, and partly of subtle contrast. Scipio Æmilianus was the parallel suggested, as having, like the victor of Rocroy, united the love of letters in retirement to his military prowess. But in making his *Emile* a perfect hero in all respects, La Bruyère did not intend barefaced flattery of his very imperfect model; he merely insinuated alongside of the traits which properly belonged to it, certain others taken from the character of Marshal Turenne, who, "sincère pour Dieu et pour les hommes," was, in many points, the very opposite of Condé, and whose merits, thus brought in, as it were, to cover Condé's known defects, gave rather an ironical than a laudatory turn to the sketch.

Prince Henri-Jules is alluded to in many detached hints of character. We see him in *Téléphon*, the dangerous and unapproachable, in the category of the "hommes nés inaccessibles," whose position in the world,

nevertheless, makes them peculiarly necessary to others; who, mobile as quicksilver, shriek, gesticulate, and throw about fire and flame, and are manageable only when exhausted and useless. The Prince's absent fits come in for their share of description, along with those of the notorious Duc de Brancas, in the elaborate portrait of *Ménalque*, and again, when speaking of the great in rank, "ask of them neither reflection, nor gratitude, nor reward," says the satirist; "great men pride themselves on opening an alley in a forest, on enclosing their estates by a long wall, in raising ten inches of water, in filling an orangery; but to render a heart contented, to fill a soul with joy, to ward off or to remedy heavy calamities—to this their curious industry extends not."

In his strictures on "Woman," La Bruyere, it is thought, glances at the Duchesse de Bourbon's love of play and of wine; in the chapter on "Society" to the clamorous literary arguments which were carried on in the "Mauritanian" circle; and in the opinions ascribed to *Lucile*, in the chapter on the "*Esprits Forts*," we see how theoretic materialism had laid hold of the clever but perverted mind of the young Duke her husband. These are but a portion of the allusions, proved or conjectured, to the Condés and their concerns.

La Bruyère's work had been the slow growth of years. Many of his observations refer to experiences gained before his connection with the house of Condé. His studious attic, the Paris theatre of his youth, the loungers in the Tuileries gardens, furnished material for his early essays in moral anatomy. Why, it has been asked, did he wait to publish his work till the year after the death of the great Condé? Because he was afraid of Condé's criticism? But the Prince must have known its nature and its contents well, and they were such as, in the main, at all events, to satisfy him. Another reason is imaginable from the juxtaposition of these two facts: that, in the beginning of the year 1687, he resigned his office of treasurer, and that his book, which appeared only a few months subsequently, contains severe strictures on the venality of Government financiers. He would not publish strictures on a class of which he was himself at the time a member. Only when his office and pay were renounced, did he feel free to speak his mind, enlarged by actual experience. *Why* he resigned his office just then is another question, to which we have no answer; but, guess for guess, may not Condé, perchance, have bequeathed to him some legacy by which his circumstances were improved?

Let us now turn to one or two of the more general topics of La Bruyère's satire, in order to point out how they acquire new significance viewed in the light of the biographical relations which have lately been brought into notice.

Scattered among his pages we perceive various indications of a sturdy sympathy with the poor of the land—the working-classes, as we are accustomed to call them. This was a sympathy notoriously deficient in the writers and statesmen of his time. In La Bruyère it assumes a new

interest, when we regard it as, in some measure, a relic of the *ligueur* tradition. The revolutionists of 1588, although religious, not secular, politics formed the platform of their revolt, had anticipated those of two centuries later, in appealing to popular sympathies for their support, and had advanced the rights of the democracy as against those of king and nobles. On the visits which we may suppose him to have paid with his Condé patrons to their prefecture of Burgundy, La Bruyère would have had opportunities of observing the appalling contrast between the selfish indulgence of the grandees among whom he habitually lived, and the misery of their dependants. Accordingly, it is with more than usual picturesqueness and energy that we find him describing the peasantry as counting for no more than "the wild animals they resembled. Black, livid, scorched by the sun, fixed to the soil they cultivate, and whose sods they turn over with invincible pertinacity . . . . retiring at night to dens, where they live on black bread, roots, and water; they spare other men the trouble of sowing, labouring, and reaping. Surely they deserve not to perish for lack of the bread they have themselves been the instruments of producing." A coincidence has been discovered which heightens the significance of this passage. The year after the great Condé's death, Prince Henri-Jules, his successor, assembled the States of Burgundy at Dijon: it was in the spring of 1688. A few weeks later took place at Chantilly the grand display of the *Fête Dauphine*, given in honour of a week's visit from Monseigneur the heir-apparent of France, in which magnificence ran riot in the effort to outshine the splendours of Versailles. The fourth edition of La Bruyère's work, which was issued in 1689, appeared enriched by his remarks both on the fête (in the chapter "*Des Ouvrages de l'Esprit*"), and by those on the wretchedness of the peasantry above cited (in the chapter "*De l'Homme*"). Is it far-fetched to conclude that he had been an eye-witness of both phases of life, and moralized, in his tacit way, on the self-suggesting contrast they afforded when consigned to his pages?

Another subject, upon which La Bruyère has launched the bolts of his moral satire with yet more direct vigour and frequency, is that of the fashionable religionism of his day. Here his posture may be elucidated not only by his sound good sense and right feeling, but also by his connection with the opposition court of the Condés, and by his antagonism, as a disciple of the Oratorians, to the social policy of the Jesuits. For the art, or whim, or science, of "devotion,"—a term applied to the phenomena of religious sentimentalism as apart from active principle,—had, in like manner with that of casuistry, been long systematized by the teachers of the school of Loyola. How much it had gained acceptance in society, even while Louis XIV.'s reign was young and worldly, may be seen in many memoirs of the period. Mdlle. de Montpensier, for instance, with her satiric pen, introduces us to some delicious specimens of the genus "dévote." She tells of Mdlle. de Saujon, "Elle roule fort les yeux dans la tête, et regarde toujours en haut. . . . Elle laisse à entendre que

c'est parceque son esprit s'applique peu à ce qui regarde le monde." Of Madame de Thiange, "Elle nous dit des merveilles sur la dévotion: elle en eut un accés admirable. J'appelle ce bon mouvement ainsi, parcequ'il ne dura pas davantage." And of herself she does not hesitate to record how, while endeavouring to acquire the accomplishment of "devotion" in order to suit herself to her prospective husband, the German Emperor, she became so bitten with the fancy that for eight days she thought of really turning Carmelite nun, and giving up Empire and all!

The topic was one freely handled, not only by La Bruyère, but by the two other social satirists of Louis' reign, Molière and Boileau. The Jesuits, who guided the movement, had not always possessed the vantage ground of royal favour to make satire a dangerous game; and though they did succeed for a time in preventing the representation of Molière's *Tartuffe*, yet, when that famous character came on the boards at last, it was highly relished by King and courtiers. But about the midway of his reign Louis submitted to the influences of "devotion" himself; at first holding it in solution with his favourite mundane vices, but as his Jesuit confessor and Madame de Maintenon riveted their power over him, seeking very systematically to secure his "salut," whether by increased strictness of religious and moral observances, or by enhanced cruelty in the persecution of heretics. To pay court to the King, people now found that the best way was to turn devout; and lords and ladies of the *haut ton* went to mass with infinite assiduity, and as they must needs keep up a fashionable rivalry about something, boasted against each other respecting the charms and merits of their various "directors."

It may easily be imagined that to the clever cynical Condés, with the *frondeur* tone which always prevailed more or less in their circle, this court religionism was fruitful matter for contempt and irony. If not "devout," and indeed very far from moral themselves, they were at least not dissemblers. Possibly, had they lived three-quarters of a century later, they would have found themselves in full sympathy with the opinions promulgated by the philosophic school of the Encyclopedists. But La Bruyère was no scoffer. He carried on his warfare, not from the barren plain of free-thinking indifferentism, but from the fortress of religious consistency. He, too, saw through all this hypocrisy to its backbone. "Un dévot," he said, "est celui qui sous un Roi athée seroit athée." The symptoms of the transformation, indeed, were not far to seek even while the Grand Monarque's reign still dragged on; and eventually Louis XV. and the Regency afforded full confirmation of the dictum. To this we shall presently have to recur.

La Bruyère's celebrated character of *Onuphre*, the pretended "devot," first appeared in the edition of the *Caractères* published in 1691. It has often been compared with that of Molière's *Tartuffe*. Tartuffe was in some respects a less perilous venture, inasmuch as though he encountered the anger of the Jesuits and their partisans, the King and Court were, at the time of his appearance, inclined to laugh with the author. *Onuphre*

satirised habits now cherished in the highest places. But, on the other hand, it should perhaps be taken into account that the applause bestowed on *Tartuffe* when the public representation of the character was at last sanctioned, had ratified the claim of the religious impostor to be treated as a conventional subject of satire. It would seem that nothing in the whole apparatus of the falsetto religion now in vogue so much stirred La Bruyère's indignation as the pretensions of the directors of conscience, the superstitious frivolities of their slaves, and the depreciation of the real duties of life which was the consequence of their system. Hear his complaint of the "inexhaustible pepper-box of directors," whom fashion had set in motion: "in whom," he says, "I seem to behold everything diametrically opposed to enlightened intellect, good sense, experience of the world's affairs, knowledge of mankind, and the science of morals and religion." It is inconceivable to him, he adds, how such persons "can presume that God should renew in our days the marvel of the Apostolate, and perform a miracle in their persons by rendering them, ignorant and narrow-minded as they are, capable of the ministry of souls,—the ministry, of all others, the most delicate and sublime; still more inconceivable should they imagine that they do indeed possess the gifts for such an office, and are fulfilling their natural vocation when exercising it."

Turn again to his companion-picture, the subject on whom these quack physicians of souls were especially wont to exercise their skill, the "femme qu'on dirige." "Qu'est ce qu'une femme qu'on dirige?" asks the censor; (a woman, that is, who confides the management of her conscience to a spiritual director). "Is she a woman more complaisant to her husband, more gentle to her servants, more attentive to her family and her affairs, more ardent and sincere towards her friends? a woman who is less the slave of her caprices than others, less guided by self-interest, less solicitous for the comforts of life? &c. . . . . No, you say, she is none of these things. I persist, and ask again, qu'est ce qu'une femme qu'on dirige? I hear you; it is a woman who has a director." This description, by the way, it is worth remarking, was evidently copied by Boileau, in his tenth satire, published in 1693. The passage is as follows:—

Sur cent pieux devoirs aux Saints elle est égale.
Elle lit Rodriguez, fait l'Oraison mentale,
Va pour les malheureux quêter dans les maisons,
Hante les Hôpitaux, visite les prisons,
Tous les jours à l'Eglise entend jusqu'à six messes;
Mais de combattre en elle, et dompter ses faiblesses,
Sur le fard, sur le jeu vaincre sa passion,
Mettre un frein à son luxe, à son ambition,
Et soumettre l'orgueil de son esprit rebelle,
C'est ce qu'en vain le ciel voudroit exiger d'elle.
Et peut-il, dira-t-elle, en effet l'exiger?
Elle a son Directeur, c'est à lui d'en juger.

La Bruyère was a many-sided man: Louis the XIV.'s was a many-sided reign: and circumstances arose, which, notwithstanding other points

of difference, brought our moralist towards the close of his life into certain sympathetic relations with the court and its adherents. It should be remembered that, although in virtue of his connection with the Condés he belonged to a social centre which was in some sort a rival centre to that of Versailles, yet at no time did this emulation extend to a complete separation of persons and interests. The Condés claimed their own distinguished place of honour, when the Sovereign's relatives assembled round him in the purple chambers of royalty, and many of their satellites were satellites of Louis likewise. If this was the case during the great Condé's lifetime, still more was it so after his grandson's marriage with the King's daughter had drawn the family ties closer. But the special circumstances referred to arose in this wise. It came to pass that as "young France" began to tire of the grooves in which custom's wheels had for some time been running, a new style of opposition spirit gathered head at Paris, a spirit which assumed the garb of free-thinking libertinism in religion, and of depreciation of the genius and example of the ancient classics in literature. The capital, slighted by the King, and true to its inherited *frondeur* impulses, was the natural stronghold of the audacious wits who thus held up to derision *l'antiquaille, i.e.* the whole bundle of old-fashioned prejudices by which the world of yesterday, as they considered it, was governed. The literary Coryphæus of the go-ahead party was Fontenelle; their organ in the appeal to public opinion was the *Mercure Galant;* and Pierre Corneille, whose brother edited that journal, was the poetical star, whose merits they especially cried up, as against the favourite court dramatist, Racine. In the later portion of Louis's reign, the opposition between Paris and Versailles became more and more decided. Courtiers who went to lodge in the capital were considered as committing themselves both to contempt of the old King, and also to the free-thinking fashion which was to be the badge of the expected new reign, and which became the more pronounced, the more devotion grew into favour at court. Sometimes, indeed, a clever aspirant would contrive to keep an interest in both shops; playing the atheist among the lively wits of the capital, and the devotee among the sombre zealots of Versailles. The tone which characterized this modern opposition was totally opposed to the convictions of La Bruyère, who now found himself on the Conservative side, as it were, and sympathizing, to a certain extent, with the creeds and fashions patronized at court. The "quarrel of the ancients and moderns," a famous controversy of the day, rather literary than religious, afforded the most notable occasion of *rapprochement.*

And here the shadow of a great name connects itself again with La Bruyère's personality. Not one of his friendships seems to have been more lasting and sincere than that which subsisted between him and Bossuet; and this in spite of some marked differences of opinion and original training. Bossuet hated the old Leaguers, was no friend to the Oratory, and thoroughly distrusted mental progress. But he honoured in La Bruyère

a spirit of independence which was allied with staunch religious orthodoxy, and for this was content to pardon him his love of intellectual research, his passionate admiration of the heathen classics, his uncompromising defence of the theatre, and his partiality for the writings of the sceptical Montaigne. What La Bruyère felt for the Bishop of Meaux may be best understood from his lofty allusion to *Trophime* (afterwards altered to *Bénigne*) in the *Caractères*, and from the eulogium introduced in his *Discours de Reception*, the last sentence of which—"Nommez, Messieurs, une vertue qui ne soit pas la sienne!"—may, perhaps, have suggested to Pope the line on *his* beloved prelate,—

To Berkeley every virtue under Heaven!

It was through his intercourse with Bossuet and with that prelate's theological coterie, familiarly called "Le Petit Concile," * that La Bruyère became a member of an affiliated literary society which survived the Petit Concile itself, and was known as that of "Les Pères Laïques." Racine and Boileau belonged to this society also, and the study of the ancient writers of Greece and Rome was affixed as their special enthusiasm. Though Bossuet, a theologian in grain, had no sympathy with this direction of their literary taste, it was natural that their original connection with his Petit Concile should bring them within the influences of the world of Versailles, in which the great prelate shone a star of the first magnitude. Moreover, between La Bruyère and Fontenelle a very pronounced spirit of personal antagonism soon set in. The details need not now be recapitulated, but its effect was detrimental to the author of the *Caractères*, in his efforts to get himself elected a member of the Académie Française; and when, after his fruitless competitions, he at last succeeded, the so-called "Norman" clique † were loud in their satire. Their irritation was presently increased by the somewhat proud and independent tone in which the new Academician pitched his *Discours de Reception*, and by his preference therein given to the poetry of Racine over that of Corneille. For a moment, indeed, the Academy itself demanded that the passage containing the offensive sentiment should be suppressed, but Bossuet made it known that, in that case, Racine would never appear at the Academy again. Party-spirit waxed so strong on the occasion that the King's curiosity was aroused, and he desired to have the now famous *Discours* read aloud to him at one of his Marly dinners. He applauded it highly; and its author did not fail to add the royal approbation to the other topics of self-defence introduced with satirical force into the preface which accompanied his Discourse when printed. In the eighth edition of the *Caractères*, the last published in his lifetime, La Bruyère dealt his final

* Or, more familiarly still, *Les Condomophages, i. e.* feasters on the good companionship of the Bishop of Condom (Bossuet held that title at the time): the wit of the allusion consisting in the circumstance, that his dinners were so bad as to leave his guests no other food for their sustenance than his own rich conversation.

† Normandy was the native province of Fontenelle and the Corneilles.

stroke against Fontenelle, by inserting the character of *Cydias*, the professional *bel esprit*, the master-manufacturer of general literature, working with his journeymen under him, and turning off to order elegies, letters, "prose, vers, que voulez-vous ? . . . a compound of the pedant and the *précieux*, made to be admired by the bourgeoisie and the provinces, in whom, nevertheless, one can discern nothing lofty save the opinion which he has of himself." The mortification occasioned him by this satire Fontenelle is said never to have got over. As he lived for upwards of sixty years afterwards, it may be doubted whether so long a literary grudge was ever felt before or since.

He who shot the dart which rankled so effectually did not long survive its emission.

It was on the 8th of May, 1696, two days after a lively supper at Paris, where he had been reading some passages from his own *Dialogues sur le Quiétisme*, a work of his latter days, written in unison with the opinions of Bossuet on that controverted subject, that he was seized with an apoplectic stroke—after supper again—in the apartments of the Prince de Condé at Versailles. The court doctors came in hot haste. Every approved remedy was tried, in vain. His enemies of the *Mercure Galant* insinuated that he had eaten to excess; but his death was so sudden and unexpected that the more dramatic solution of poison was whispered, and even printed. His work had provoked resentment in many breasts; and the revenge was not thought improbable. Gacon, a small versifier of the day, half suggested that the eagerness of a designing plagiarist had something to do with it:

> C'est ainsi que Brillon, pour voler La Bruyère,
> Attend que cet auteur ait fini sa carrière,
> Et qu'un *fatal poison*, l'envoyant au tombeau,
> Ait vengé les méchants dont il était le fléau ;
> Mais ne crains pas, Brillon, qu'un breuvage homicide
> Soit le funeste prix de ton livre insipide, &c.

Brillon was the author of the *Théophraste Moderne*, one of the numerous imitations of the *Caractères*.

A few weeks only before La Bruyère's death, the funeral-bell had tolled for the Marquise de Sevigné, as close an observer as himself of the personages and events of the time, and one who, more than any other female writer, merited the eulogiums he bestows on the epistolary accomplishments of the fair sex. Yet it is not apparent, but, on the whole, improbable, that La Bruyère ever knew her or her letters. Not once throughout her lively correspondence does the Marquise allude to the *Caractères* or their author, living, though she did, in the same capital with him, knowing many of the same people, keeping on terms of pretty frequent intercourse with the Condés themselves, being nearly related, moreover, to Bussy Rabutin, who was his friend and admirer. This is certainly a curious circumstance. One would have supposed that to such a lover of gossip the successive editions of the *Caractères* would afford a

fruitful theme of discussion in her letters to her daughter. But, on the whole, Madame de Sevigné and La Bruyère belonged to different sections of society. The lady was completely of the Versailles set; her acquaintance was mainly among the courtiers and the *haute noblesse*. The satirist, from his early associations, as well as from the general character of the Condé *entourage*, was thrown among professionals and officials, and those rather of an Opposition clique. Madame de Sevigné frequented the fashionable society of the Marais; La Bruyère the society of the Faubourg St. Honoré, where lawyers and bourgeoisie abounded. So it was that they dwelt apart, and described different sides of that brilliant busy world of theirs. It has been remarked that even in the famous portrait of *Ménalque*, the absent man, intended in its principal features for the Duc de Brancas, so often mentioned by Madame de Sevigné, the incidents of his abstraction specified by La Bruyère are never the same as those which she recounts.

The world must have been duller, we fancy, when these two animated onlookers were withdrawn from its haunts. But—it is our philosopher who asks the question—"who is there, endowed, though he may be, with the rarest talents and the most transcendent merit, who must not be convinced of his own uselessness when he reflects that in dying he quits a world which has no consciousness of his loss, and where so many are at hand immediately to replace him?"

The literary planet of the next century had already peeped above the horizon. Voltaire was a child of two years old when the grave closed over La Bruyère and the Marquise de Sevigné.

Against Time.

CHAPTER XVI.

Barrington Fallen on his Feet.

MAKING his way into one of the drawing-rooms by a side-door, Hugh nearly plunged into the arms of his cousin, Lady Alice, who, as it chanced, was talking at the moment to Maude Childersleigh and Miss Winter.

"Enter the conspirator at last! What have you been plotting downstairs with papa and his grace of Dunstanburgh?" was the salutation of his out-spoken cousin. "Here have I just been speaking to an old friend of yours, whom Rushbrook picked up somewhere and brought along with him, and he seemed positively put out when I told him you had vanished. I assured him your engagements barely left you time for food, to say nothing of friends; that months had passed since I entrapped you last into a *tête-à-tête*. But, as he didn't seem half satisfied, I referred him back to Rushbrook, and Rushbrook discovered you were closeted with the Duke; but whether the Duke was securing you for the next Cabinet, or canvassing for a seat at your Turkish Board—that's what you call it, isn't it?—he couldn't pretend to say. I don't know which would be the more flattering; but I hope devoutly it was the former, and so I am sure does Miss Childersleigh."

Lady Alice, in many respects, was the very counterpart of her brother. Few people called her pretty; but her features could light up surprisingly when she talked, and as hers was anything but a retiring nature, and she never was quiet when she could possibly help it, she managed to make the very most of what looks she had. Her mother, having failed in

He flung himself back on an ottoman, the centre of a group of beauty.

persuading her to tone down her manners to something of the maternal repose, had resigned herself placidly to being scandalized by them.

"You show all your usual penetration, Alice. One or the other it was of course, and equally of course my lips are sealed. I quite forgot to get the Duke's permission to talk it over with you. I always am overlooking something."

"Well, I suppose we must restrain our curiosity, until it is satisfied by time or the papers. How I do wish you would take to politics, Hugh! In a few years we should have you Premier, giving papa the Garter, and Rushbrook the Governor-Generalship of India, or something of that sort."

Maude, in the meantime, had kept her eyes steadily on his face. Possibly, the interest she had taken in reading that particular volume may have helped her to understand it. She may have penetrated to his preoccupation through his seeming unconcern, for she became abstracted herself, and answered more gravely than was in keeping with Lady Alice's rattle.

"From what I know of him, Lady Alice, our best advice would be wasted. But I candidly avow my grovelling ideas, and I think even the privilege of giving away ribbons may be bought too dear. I don't think Mr. Childersleigh very likely to lose his head in climbing; but it seems to me it's safer making quite sure of your position on one ladder, before being lured by a will-o'-the-wisp to put your foot upon another and a higher one."

"How unpleasantly and eloquently practical you are, Miss Childersleigh. I must say I'm disappointed in finding an enemy where I looked for an ally. Well, now my only hope of help is from Miss Winter."

Lucy blushed. The shyness that had worn itself away in the familiar atmosphere of "The Cedars" was still apt to reclaim its prey when she went out into the world. She felt ill-assured, too, in her sensitive consciousness of the ambiguous circumstances under which she had come out. Do what Maude might, Lucy could never shake herself free from the idea she was an encumbrance her friend dragged about with her in her good-nature. She turned her great hazel eyes on Hugh, who was looking at her half amused; but when she spoke, it was with a bashful earnestness that fixed his attention somehow, although there was very little in the words.

"I daresay Maude may be right, but it seems to me a man might stay where he was for life, were he to see a will-o'-the-wisp in every light that signalled him onwards."

"Thank you for so much, Miss Winter. Your sympathies are with me rather than Miss Childersleigh, and that's enough. I daresay Hugh is longing to tell us we're all chasing wills-o'-the-wisp at this very moment, and that my brain is just the place to start them. But look, Hugh, here comes that very persevering friend of yours, Captain Barrington."

Hugh started and turned. The name carried him back again to his old life. There, to be sure, was Barrington in person, and approaching

in a state of excitement very unusual with him. Although the words of their greeting were commonplace enough, we may venture to say no warmer hand-grip had been exchanged that evening in Hestercombe House.

"So here you are, Barrington, come to town just as every one else is leaving—every one, at least, who is not tied by business as I am."

"Yes, Lady Alice has been enlightening me on your change of habits. Miracles never cease. As I've her word for it, I have no doubt it's all true, and I'm glad to hear of your reformation. I'm in town on business myself, as it happens."

"It's a cool evening, and I was thinking of walking home. If you can tear yourself away, come along and let me hear all about it."

"So you're going already, Hugh?" said his cousin, affecting to make a little *moue* of despite. "You see I didn't exaggerate, Captain Barrington. He comes for dinner, he swallows it, and not a moment will he spare to frivolity."

"The truth is, Alice, and no one knows it better than you, you've spoiled me for anything but a quiet domestic life. I feel all abroad in a giddy crowd like this."

And Hugh, taking a laughing leave of that trio of the Graces, made his escape from the room. Although his mind was made up, he was anxious to be alone to think quietly over the momentous conversation of the evening. It is always a serious thing burning your boats, even if time is likely to bring you another flotilla. In the meantime, although sincerely pleased to see him, it must be confessed that, in the idea of extricating himself, he had availed himself of Barrington as the first excuse that came to hand. Even as he took his friend's arm, his mind was somewhat distraught, and he cast a wistful glance at the crowd of cabs.

Yet Barrington's story, when he came to hear it, interested him, the more so that he thought he saw that that first generous action of his at Homburg had borne its fruits.

"Let me see, Childersleigh, when did you hear of me last?"

"Something about a year ago you sent me a line and a half from somewhere—Dresden, I think."

"Ah, yes, I quartered myself there for a time, and eminently respectable and preciously dull I found it. We drank beer on the Brül'sche Terrace, and played whist at the Bellevue, and then there were the pictures and the music, but I didn't care much for them. Well, about a couple of months ago, I turned up at Wildbad for a little change, quiet and cheap. Who should be one of the next arrivals but a rich old uncle of mine, who owns a pair of parishes in Norfolk. Awfully bad he was, with the gout flying all over him. An old bachelor, with a dozen of nephews like myself, and every one of them far more promising. I ran up against his bath-chair one morning, and we cut each other dead. He had been a little too frank with his advice, and by no means free with his money, when we saw each other last; very good the former was, I daresay; but, as I told him, rather outspoken and somewhat uncalled for. However, I stayed on at Wildbad,

simply to show I didn't care for him one way or other, and a good thing it was for me, as it turned out."

"After some days, when he saw I never came near him, he sent for me and offered me his hand—his left one, for the right was all wrapped up in flannel. The one he had to spare was nothing but a bundle of chalkstones, and that, perhaps, was why I took it. The old fellow was terribly lonely and fearfully savage; so, as there was no one there to see, on account of the one I put up with the other. He found himself all the better for losing his temper, so he used to abuse me to his heart's content, and an uncommonly rough time I had of it. So I should have gone on, I daresay, but a cousin of mine came out there, who holds the family living at the family place, and seemed to have made up his mind to the next presentation to the property as well.

"One day when the old gentleman had been pitching into me much as usual, the Rev. George chose to compliment me on my Christian patience or something of that sort. I cut up rough, like a fool; and the amiable invalid, who never before had been able to get a rise of temper out of me, was quite delighted and poked up the fire: said I really had been very forbearing, and there might be reasons for it, as George might imagine. He was grinning like a demon all the time with the pain; but I could see his face change when I got up and told him that, now that I could leave him in good hands, I would not punish him with my society longer. In an hour I was driving out of the place."

"Sharp work and very unlike you and your deliberation."

"Very unlike me in more ways than one, you may say. I could not trust myself, you see. He had heaps of money, and was beginning to take to me, and I was such a poor beggar. So I didn't dare to pull up even at Baden, but went on straight to Homburg. Who do you think drew me at the Quatre Saisons three days later, but my uncle's old servant, whom he had never let out of his sight for years, charged with the most abject apologies, and ordered, as he told me, never to show again unless he brought me with him!"

"Upon my honour I congratulate you."

"There was nothing to be done but go back. I found the Rev. George had been started off with a flea in his ear, although, for once in his life, the old gentleman was left to the tender mercies of the waiters. To make a long story short, he insisted on settling a handsome allowance upon me forthwith,—I did not take much pressing,—constituted me purse-bearer in ordinary, and I have just brought him home to England by easy stages. We came to town from Dover this afternoon. I went straight to 'Doodle's' to ask for you, stumbled upon Rushbrook, who, like a good fellow as he is, told me I should most likely see you at Hestercombe House, and carried me there accordingly."

Having thus brought his autobiography down to the latest moment, and received the warm congratulations of his friend on his improved prospects, Barrington said good-night in Bond Street, turning off to

the private hotel in Dover Street, where he was putting up with his relative.

Hugh walked into his rooms to pass a thoughtful night in bed and out of it. His resolution was fixed, far past shaking, but never had he felt more strongly all that wealth was worth.

"If I had only had that money of Miss Childersleigh's, instead of mud-larking on the bank," he added, bitterly. "Reason the more that being hard at work to get it, I might have taken this tide of fortune at the turn, instead of seeing it ebb away from beneath me: while I stand wealth must be won if it lies in man to win it. It's idle wasting regrets on the past: the moral of it all is to make myself my own master in the future."

Then Hugh comforted himself as he could with the thought that it was the terms of Miss Childersleigh's will that had brought him the Duke of Dunstanburgh's offer; and so he wrote to decline, bent more doggedly than ever on his City task.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mr. Hemprigge in Society.

We fear we have been somewhat neglectful of Mr. Hemprigge, and Mr. Hemprigge is not a man who likes to be overlooked. But, in truth, lately he had been pushed a good deal to the wall, and he felt it. From his versatile brain had sprung the Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey. He it was to whom the famous Mr. Childersleigh owed reputation and commercial existence, and it came hard on him to be quietly thrust back into the second place. To return to a metaphor that served us before: the elephant he had caught had proved thoroughly up to his work, and had done it well, but then he would go about his work his own way, and had thoroughly got the better of his mahout. And as time went on, Hemprigge had seen his only superiority, his technical knowledge of business details, passing quietly away from him. From the first he had reluctantly recognized the Governor for his master in grasp and vigour of thought. He could never vie with him in the position, the tone, the manner that imposed on men and meetings, and, after an undemonstrative resistance, which, to do him justice, his shrewdness had cut very short, *bon gré, mal gré*, he resigned himself. Mr. Childersleigh was left the Governor in fact as in name. Mr. Hemprigge remained Managing Director, superintending admirably the mechanical work of the association.

Mr. Hemprigge had his consolations, or might have had them, although we suspect most of his material and social successes were poisoned to him by a certain consciousness of failure. Yet it was neither Childersleigh's wish nor policy to parade the submission he exacted of the other. So long as he kept the substance of authority, he was well content that Hemprigge

and his dignity should make the most of the semblance. The Board felt where the power lay, and knew on whom they pinned their faith; if their clients and the world thought Mr. Hemprigge a greater man than he was, there was no harm done. So, if Hemprigge, perforce, toned his manners down to elaborate courtesy, in harmony with the general spirit of the establishment, in spite of himself, he could not help showing the cloven foot now and again, in a brusqueness touched with brutality, to those who insisted in abjectly humbling themselves before him.

There was slight change in his external man. He was quick to observe and imitate, and, since we knew him first, had somewhat retrenched on his wealth of jewellery; but for that he recompensed himself by clothes more fashionably cut than ever, and launched into lavish luxury in the matter of glossy hats. His fashionable little person swelled up more grandly than ever against his snowy vest,—and in high-heeled boots and an honest consciousness of position, he had added a full half-inch to his modest stature.

Then there could be no mistake as to his means. Thanks to official and unofficial sources of income, Hemprigge was a rich man. He had transferred the quiet Sackville Street business to the gentleman who had officiated there as his clerk. So he said, at least; and we have no right to credit, in preference to the statement he solemnly volunteered on all occasions, those flying whispers that set Mr. Roper down as simply a man of straw, and asserted all the profits to be for Mr. Hemprigge. He had his spacious apartments on a first-floor in Piccadilly, besides a snug little box perched high on Streatham Common, where he gave the most charming little dinners to select circles of plutocrats.

For Mr. Hemprigge was courted in an extensive society. His graceful poses on his steady but showy park-hack made him the admiration of awe-struck provincials. His hat, removed with a D'Orsay flourish of the rim, was more often in his hand than on his head, when he was not kissing his straw-coloured gloves in acknowledgment of the smiles of beauty. He had his stall at the opera, too, where he martyred himself with creditable constancy through long hot nights in the season; and it was a sight to see him guiding his high-swung mail-phaeton, with its high-bred, high-actioned, mammoth chestnuts; remarkably free-goers they were,—rather too much so, indeed, for the muscles of his biceps and the peace of his mind. On the whole, they deserved the admiration they challenged, although it was somewhat hard to get at their points through the mazes of their embossed harness, all ablaze with the Hemprigge crest. The art of driving had not been included in their owner's earlier education, and it was rumoured that, when he first set up his chariot, the prudent directors of the "Gryphon" had hesitated to insure his life on any ordinary policy. But Hemprigge was a man who could make something of most matters he set his mind to. Now collisions had become comparatively rare with him, although still, when he tendered to his friends the seat by his side, it was not unfrequently declined with thanks or accepted in trembling.

He had become courted, as we said, in certain sets, and if he cared for admiration and appreciation, he had the one and the other forced on him in plenty. But, of course, he found slight satisfaction while revolving in the circles where he was recognized as an ornament, so long as he was constantly reminded in others that he was only there upon sufferance. Lord Rushbrook delighted in him, and, cultivating him in a way of his own, encouraged him insidiously in the airs he was disposed to take.

But it was delicate work fooling Hemprigge: indeed, it may be surmised, he penetrated his noble friend's motives, and perfectly comprehended the footing on which he was permitted to stand with him. We may rest assured, although they saw a good deal of each other, there was little love lost between the two. But the friendship of Lord Rushbrook and the hospitalities of Hestercombe House were the trump-cards Hemprigge held in playing his little social game; he could always rely on finding men like Budger to call them for him.

"High fellow, Hemprigge," that gentleman would observe; "goes anywhere he pleases and does just what he likes; has the run of Hestercombe House regular, I understand."

And even when his own personal consequence was at the highest, asserting itself among the gilded splendours of his palace in Park Lane, Budger would treat the manager with a pompous half-bullying deference. He exaggerated the triumphs of his friend, and Hemprigge suffered him to romance at will. Hemprigge did not dine regular at Hestercombe House, but he had been more than once admitted within its exclusive gates. It had amused Lord Rushbrook to take him there, and Lord Hestercombe received any guest introduced by his son. Besides, the Earl looked on the Manager as a sort of commercial henchman of his nephew's, and was inclined to tolerate his occasionally following his master into society as swelling his master's consequence.

At "The Cedars" he was a much more frequent visitor. Hugh, who fathomed his colleague's social aspirations, and was not unwilling to flatter them so far as he reasonably could, had asked leave to present him there, and, strange to say, Purkiss had taken him up and helped him to make good his footing. You would have said the two men were uncongenial enough, yet they seemed drawn together by a hidden sympathy into something resembling friendship. Perhaps it was only that they found each other mutually helpful. Purkiss's good offices gave Hemprigge ready access to a house where it was creditable, and might be profitable, to have a footing. Purkiss was a shareholder in Mr. Hemprigge's company, and might be glad on occasion to draw information from near the fountain-head.

Sir Basil, at first, barely tolerated him; but Hemprigge would never have got on so well in life if he had not known how to deal with men like Sir Basil. He set himself down at the feet of the venerable Lombard Street Gamaliel with so candid a humility that the old banker could not but be touched and flattered. Sir Basil interested himself in the conversion of this clever young heretic, who, with little less intelligence than Hugh,

was far less self-appreciative and much more open to conviction; who argued so closely and logically, and yet somehow contrived to lay himself so terribly open to the thrusts of the older man. He came out wonderfully, especially in Hugh's absence, and never did the banker find his evenings fly more pleasantly than when he had the plastic Mr. Hemprigge for his guest.

The ladies of the family did not like him quite so much.

"Oh, by the way, Maude, Hemprigge dines with us to-morrow," said Purkiss to his sister, sauntering into the drawing-room one afternoon on his return from the City.

"Dines to-morrow, again? Why, he dined here once this week already," ejaculated Maude. She did not try to conceal her despite, which Lucy did, although altogether unsuccessfully.

Purkiss heard smilingly the tone of his sister's answer, and absolutely beamed when he caught the expression on Miss Winter's face.

"You forget, Maude, it was Saturday last. But I'm sure you must agree with me that we can't be too civil to Hugh's right-hand man. I won't call him Hugh's head, although other people do."

"Head, indeed!" flashed up Maude; "an excellent head-clerk I don't doubt, if that's what you mean; very industrious and punctual in carrying out orders. I don't wonder you take to him, Purkiss."

"Nonsense, Maude, you do him injustice, and are talking of what you know nothing whatever," broke in Sir Basil, speaking much more angrily than was his habit with his daughter. "I fancy I may call myself a fair judge, and let me tell you I find Mr. Hemprigge an exceedingly promising young man; very modest and unassuming with it all, and much more ready than others I could name to profit by the instructions of his elders. It is a kindness having him here, and, as I have every reason to believe, my counsels are of real service to him. Tell him from me, Purkiss, we shall have very great pleasure in seeing him."

"I will, sir," returned Purkiss, triumphantly. "As he always says, he feels it a privilege as well as a pleasure coming to you, for he never finds himself in your company without getting valuable lights."

"Yes, I think I may have been of use to him," returned Sir Basil, complacently. "I am glad to know I have opened his eyes to some of the fallacies of the new theories and the abuses of the new system."

"Why should that stupid Mr. Hemprigge trouble himself to come here so often?" asked Maude of her friend, when they found themselves, a little later, in their boudoir.

"Stupid he is not, Maude," responded Lucy, unconsciously fencing with the question.

"Well, vulgar then. You won't dispute that epithet. Call him anything you please, what I mean is, I don't like him. I'm quite sure you don't. We're both of us barely civil to him, the house isn't very lively, and what I ask is, why does he come here so often?"

"It's a good thing for him being received in a house like this, and

then he feels flattered by Sir Basil's evident liking for him," responded Lucy, not very candidly.

"I don't know," rejoined Maude. "Of course papa has a great deal of experience, and perhaps he might teach Mr. Hemprigge if Mr. Hemprigge were willing to learn. But then Mr. Hemprigge is not a man to be taught; even I can see how he often knocks under, when in reality he has much the best of the argument. The more I see of him the less I seem to know him, and the less I trust him. If I were to speak frankly, I should call him a hypocrite. The man has two faces, or rather half-a-dozen. Did you ever hear him differ seriously from either my father or Mr. Childersleigh? and yet how seldom these two agree. When Mr. Childersleigh is with us he is all reserve, simply because he cannot speak and act as he generally does without committing himself. I don't like to think my father is deceived; but if he is, time will open his eyes, and I don't fancy there can be much harm done. Mr. Childersleigh ought to be well able to take care of himself, but if he really does trust this Mr. Hemprigge, I should like to give him a word of warning."

"I think you are prejudiced, Maude," rejoined Lucy, warming, however, into more eagerness than she had hitherto shown; "your brother is a man of the world, and he trusts him too."

"Purkiss!" ejaculated Maude, and there was an infinity of expression in the accent. "Purkiss is a man of business, my dear, not a man of the world, and Purkiss's prejudices against other people may be very good reasons for his making friends with Mr. Hemprigge. And so I ask again, what brings Mr. Hemprigge here?"

This time Lucy's answer was a reminder that the dressing-bell had rung a full quarter of an hour before, and a precipitate retreat. The truth is, had she dealt as candidly with her friend as her friend with her, she fancied she could have answered the question. Her instincts had been whispering her for some time why Mr. Hemprigge came, although she had tried hard to be deaf to them. Hemprigge had never uttered one word that could commit him, but in his looks and manner he had spoken out. She ought to have been flattered, if not touched, by the disinterested admiration of this selfishly-prosperous man, but she was neither the one nor the other. He had agreeable manners and an abundance of superficial information that he knew very well to make the most of. He had the happy tact that greases the ways of life to the man who is working up a social incline. Raise himself as he might,—and he was likely to go on rising,—he was pretty sure to adapt himself to any successive spheres he might soar to.

He was the last man in the world to let his opportunities run to waste, or to throw his chances away. With the money he had already, so far as adding to it went, the matrimonial ball was at his feet, yet he sauntered listlessly away from it, and seemed only to ask for encouragement to throw himself at hers. With all that, what she felt for him was a distaste fast growing to repugnance. Well, there are prejudices it is very hard to

account for. The child ready to pet almost anything, turns naturally from the bright-eyed graceful snake, glittering in its silvery coils, even from the lithe lizard, gorgeous in its green and gold. There is something about the facile gliding motion that inspires distrust; a suspicion of the slime only to be detected by the touch you don't care to venture on.

If Mr. Hemprigge had in certain places to pick his way among eggs, to perform a sword-dance with the continual fear before his eyes of slipping and hurting himself on the blades, there were others where, *en revanche*, he could swagger away at his will. On the very day he was so freely canvassed at "The Cedars," he was engaged to dine at Budger's, and there you could hardly have recognized Sir Basil's retiring friend and modest acolyte in the man whom the blustering host himself delighted to honour.

Everything in Budger's mansion—footmen, furniture, master, mistress, daughters, guests—was in a more resplendent style than even at the sumptuous "Cedars." The hall struck and entranced you by its violent contrasts, from the tesselated mosaics of its floor to the flaming cornices of its ceiling. It was pervaded, like so many animated stoves, by those blazing crimson liveries we have seen clustering behind the orange carriage. In sympathy with all about him, the very butler relieved his sombre black with a profusion of sparkling stud and glittering chain.

Although the party was a small one, the guests were received in a *suite* of state drawing-rooms, where the crimson brocade of gilded chairs and couches flashed and flickered in countless mirrors. Over the deep piled carpets meandered, in glowing hues, and a tropical luxuriance, the mammoth flora of an impossible fairyland. At every step you crushed to death some brilliant butterfly or delicate humming-bird. From the walls Madonnas and St. Cecilias, Raphaels, Correggios, Murillos—all the masters of the Wardour Street School, duly labelled and ticketed, leered and simpered at you. Darius' feasts like Lord Mayors' banquets, Doges' weddings with Bucentaurs modelled after the Swan-hoppers' barge, treasures of art unknown to Kügler—Titians, Tintorettos, and Paul Veroneses were there in profusion; and with their rich blaze of colour conscientious amateurs could safely swear them marvellously like the triumphs of Venetian art.

Budger loomed larger than ever with his foot set down on the domestic rug. His cheeks bloomed a richer purple, his eye glared with a latent command, and his nostrils dilated as if to sniff the incense exhaling from the magnificence himself had created. Mrs. Budger, in her imperious corpulence, was every way worthy her pompous lord. With the thermometer at 80°, she sat draped in stuffs that might have been taken from the Venetian canvases overhead, while in her *décolletée* glory and golden chains, she looked like a barbaric princess decked out to grace the triumph of a Roman conqueror. Her tiara of many-coloured gems might have beseemed the widow of a Brahmin millionnaire preparing for suttee; the lustre of her stomacher would have dimmed the ephod of a Jewish high priest.

The fair forms of her two daughters were run on the maternal lines, and their fulness of outline must have charmed Oriental amateurs of beauty. No wonder, when, nursed in the lap of luxury, they were strictly forbidden to put their feet to the ground, and rigidly denied all but carriage exercise. Anticipating matronly state, they, too, were decked in a marvellous luxury of jewels, and Scythia and Sarmatia might have been ransacked to furnish the wealth of hair that went to furnish out their monstrous *chignons*.

The company—a dozen or so in number—were, with slight exceptions, not unworthy of their entertainers, and the general effect of the ladies was like a glimpse behind the scenes of the Châtelet in the interludes of a grand *féerie*. Any one in unassuming male costume must have felt pitiably at a disadvantage, unless sustained by a sense of proprietorship in some one of those brilliant females. Fortunately, as it chanced, either of the two bachelors of the party enjoyed the distinguished consideration of the host, accorded for different reasons and in different fashion.

Hemprigge stood confronting that gentleman on the hearth-rug, striking an attitude of easy vulgarity: an elbow on the chimney-piece, and a foot on the fender. Like the cameleon, he took his tone from his company; and, for choice, fell back on his natural manners, as men take refuge from clinging evening costume in the easy latitude of an old shooting-coat. If the perfection of good-breeding is to be perfectly unaffected and natural, Hemprigge was never so much of a gentleman as when he was least of one.

"Seen much of Rushbrook lately?" demanded Budger, breaking the silence in a stentorian key, and making every one prick their ears. "What an excellent good fellow his lordship is."

Budger threw in the title, at the risk of its implying less of intimacy than he would have liked to claim, but then it made clear to every one the rank of his friend. Perfectly unnecessarily, for no one was there who was not an *habitué* of the house, and in the house his lordship's name had become a household word.

"No better fellow going. He's down in Scotland salmon-fishing, putting up with the Duke of Berwick. No man has better fishing than the Duke, and Rushbrook writes me they're having capital sport."

Hemprigge knew full well that Budger was informed officially of Lord Rushbrook being out of town, and had only asked his question for effect. Budger had intelligence enough to be satisfied that the Managing Director was romancing, and that the letter he quoted was as mythical as the missing epistles of St. Paul.

"Has his grace got a pleasant party down there, does Rushbrook say?"

"Capital. Not a man in England or in Scotland either can do the thing better than the Duke. His house is as big as a barrack, and Rushbrook tells me it's filled from attic to cellar with half the peerage." And then Hemprigge proceeded by a creditable effort of memory to run over a list of names he had read in that morning's fashionable intelligence.

The noble muster-roll was interrupted by the announcement of the latest guest,—"The Hon. Dycington Legge."

Mr. Hemprigge hated Mr. Legge like poison, and had often hinted it to his friend Budger. But, much as he respected Hemprigge, Budger was not to be persuaded out of his acquaintance with one of the rare members of the aristocracy he met on familiar terms. Legge was seventh son of the Viscount Tarragona, an Irish Peer long resident in Brussels. Budger, as City morality goes, and in the absence of temptations to the contrary, was strictly honest in his dealings. Legge had somehow been induced to take his name successively from all his clubs; of late years he had purged, and cut Tattersall's, and it was certain that the air of the heaths and downs, affected by the turf, did not suit him now-a-days as it used to. The scandals that were shouted rather than muttered about him in St. James's had made their way round even to Budger. But that gentleman's generous spirit would admit no ill of his only titled intimate, and he shut his ears as doggedly against these calumnies as against the Honourable's covert advances toward financial negotiations.

Legge paid humble or haughty court to every monied man as his fine perception of their temperaments suggested. But Hemprigge had far too good friends to care to know Mr. Legge, and, moreover, he hated him, as we said; for Legge knew something of society, and was always finding Mr. Hemprigge out. Seeing him in the ease of the Budger circle, Legge had far better opportunities of judging him than Hugh Childersleigh, for example, who only met the manager when he was acting a part.

Of course the honourable gentleman took the hostess in charge when dinner was announced. An alderman next in rotation for the mayoralty supported her on the other side, and Mr. Hemprigge and his partner found himself in their vicinity. As the dinner went on Hemprigge's troubles began, and the cause of veracity avenged itself. The guests were rather voracious than talkative, and made better play with their teeth than their tongues. Mrs. Budger contributed but little to the flow of soul; what time she could spare from the turtle and the turbot being occupied in struggling hard to guard against early vicious habits, and blushing violently under her daughters' reproachful eyes when she committed herself.

But Budger began to sparkle with the champagne. Barren of subjects at best, and unwilling to lose sight of the best in his *répertoire;* seeing Hemprigge seated where, if he talked to him, all the world must listen, he harked back to the scent he had been following when the turtle was dragged across his trail.

"You were telling us about that letter of Rushbrook's, Hemprigge. Who does he say the Duke has got with him at Ercildoune?"

Although Hemprigge had not the resolution to look, he had a consciousness the Honourable Dycington's sarcastic eye was fixing him, and that his ears were opening to drink in his reply. He felt himself getting red as he strove to play the deaf, and made a violent effort to

engage the lady by his side in an engrossing conversation. He might as well have looked for elasticity in a feather-bed as rapidity of response from that excellent woman. Moreover, he should have known Budger better, a man whose proudest boast was his intense tenacity of purpose even in trifles.

"Hemprigge, a glass of wine with you. Try some of that 'ock, will you? I'd sooner drink it any day than try to pronounce its name, I can tell you. I picked up all I could get when they sold up the Marquis of Hampton, and paid two-and-twenty shillings for every bottle of it. The Duke of Riverdale's man ran me up, but I was bound to have it, and I choked him off at last."

"Exquisite indeed, Budger. High as you paid for it, upon my word, do you know, in my idea, you got it a bargain? Wine like that can never be dear where money's no object. By the way, talking of cellars going at fancy prices reminds me of a story."

"We'll have it by and by then, but there's nothing like one thing at a time. First let's have the news from Ercildoune. All you Irishmen are fishermen, Legge, I know. Hemprigge was just telling us when you came in of a long letter he had this morning from Rushbrook, who's putting up with the Duke of Berwick."

"Indeed. Pray let us have it, Mr. Hemprigge. It must be most interesting. I'm all anxiety, I assure you."

There was malice in his voice and a sneer in the words he could not for the life of him suppress. Hemprigge was quick to catch them; they jarred his temper and he hit out quick.

"It's very civil of Mr. Legge to say so, but I should be loth to bore him. Rushbrook and he, I know, have quite fallen out of acquaintance. He told me the other day," he added, turning significantly to the other gentleman, "he had never once set eyes upon you since the autumn Paladin broke down for the Leger."

"Yes, we haven't happened to see so much of each other lately as we used to," returned Legge, coolly. "The worst of Rushbrook is, he only takes up with fellows who go out of their way to go after him. He's shockingly toadied, Rushbrook is. But, for my part, I'm always glad to hear of old acquaintances, so pray go on with your story, Mr. Hemprigge."

So all this little side-sparring went for nothing. Budger stuck to his point, and Hemprigge—feeling that after all it really did not much matter; that Legge knew him well already, and that his opinion went for little after all,—plucked up heart, threw off a glass of wine, and proceeded to display gifts of the very first order as *improvisatore* and *raconteur*. Legge despised and admired, sneered and envied; and, if his opinion was of any consequence to Mr. Hemprigge, that gentleman might have had the satisfaction of knowing he had considerably risen in it.

"With his pleasant way of lying and his easy impudence, the fellow ought to hold honours in his hand every time he plays," thought Legge to himself.

"As well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb," soliloquized Hemprigge. "It's only the first step that signifies. As it seems I'm likely to see a good deal of Legge here, I'll have done with weakness once for all."

So completely did Mr. Hemprigge shake off his temporary embarrassment, that he made himself, at a moment's notice, the life and soul of the table. Before the ladies withdrew, he had cleared a square yard of the cloth before him, and lolling over it with both arms, was bobbing cherries into his mouth in a fashion that proclaimed his high-bred ease.

When he joined them again upstairs, he flung himself back on an ottoman, the centre of a group of beauty, his hands clasped behind his head, his eyes riveted on the ceiling, wit, wisdom, and yawns flowing from his open mouth. Honest Mrs. Budger sighed, and wished her husband would only take a lesson in deportment from his distinguished friend.

Had she but seen her admirer then, surely Lucy Winter's heart must have melted to him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Hooker "en Retraite."

Disinterested charity, as we know, often brings its reward in this world; and since the morning Maude Childersleigh robbed him of the orphan girl he had striven so affectionately to befriend, fortune had dealt kindly by our friend Hooker. When he first left Harley Street for Camberwell, he felt himself a banished man. Snug as they were, and although they called him master, the small rooms stifled him. Involuntarily he stooped in the doorways, and tucked in his elbows in the passages. He was exiled from his acquaintances, he had lost his familiar objects in life. Perhaps, disinterested as he had proved himself, he missed some excitement of alternating hopes and fears. As Mr. Rivington had surmised, he had feathered his nest indifferently well; but, comfortable as it was, its very softness and tranquillity bored him.

"I see, Sarah, you find this little place of mine dull, after all the life and the bustle you've been used to," he remarked one day, considerately, to his sister.

"It is dull, Peter; but you asked me to keep house for you, and I hope I am always willing to discharge my duty," Miss Hooker, who, although a spinster, had taken, of course, brevet rank, rejoined piously. Then suddenly sniffing suspiciously, as scenting danger, she added, hurriedly, "Not that it is dull so much as quiet, and when we once get used to that, we'll come to like it. We might go a good deal farther and be very much worse off."

"It's very good of you to talk like that, Sarah, but I won't hear of you're giving up your friends and your habits on my account. I feel I've no claim to your sacrificing yourself. I do, indeed. No, I've been thinking it well over"—he proceeded, stealing a furtive glance under his

drooping eyelids at his sister's face—"I've been thinking it over and my mind's made up. I'll get rid of the place at once, and set you at liberty again."

"Get rid of the place!" ejaculated Sarah, her jaw dropping—for she had been very far from so provident as her brother, and felt much like a superannuated raven cast out of a ménagerie cage among the jays and daws of the wicked world.

"Yes, get rid of it. The fact is," he hesitated, "I knew, in your goodness of heart, you'd insist upon sacrificing yourself, so I thought it best to settle everything out of hand before speaking to you. I've let the cottage for a year from the first of next month, rent payable quarterly."

Miss Hooker knew her brother, and she saw he was quite determined the paths in life so lately joined should once again trend asunder. Certainly she gave him none of the credit for consideration he claimed. But he was rich, and at least a couple of years older than she, and whom else had he in the world? He looked like breaking too, since he had left off work, so she put a violent constraint upon her feelings. She raised her handkerchief to her face to cover the spasms of anger that disturbed it, and responded in a voice that might have trembled either with emotion or passion:

"It seems hard to part when we might have been so very much to one another. You feel that, Hooker, don't you?"

"I do feel it, Sarah, and it's been a sore trial for me to make up my mind to." And, not to be outdone, Peter flourished a rich bandanna in sympathy. "But I made up my mind that you should be considered first; and I've done my duty, and I trust and believe I shall find my reward. Don't you think of me, Sarah; I shall manage somehow. I promised to get some bits of repairs done, and we must turn out this day week at latest."

They turned out accordingly, Hooker taking a brotherly farewell of his sister, too much overcome, perhaps, to inquire very closely into her plans and her means of carrying them out. He had domesticated himself somewhere in the familiar neighbourhood near the Marylebone Road. There he was within reach of his old friends, and could enjoy the well-earned pleasure of seeing them working away in the old harness, while he had turned himself out to grass. In a proper pride, he asserted his new position; but still, from time to time, he would turn in at the "Duke of Devonshire," the house of call of the aristocracy of the servants'-halls in the vicinity. Higgs, the landlord, welcomed him with cordial deference to the bar and best parlour, anticipated his fancies, and echoed—in his presence—his opinions. But gradually these visits became less frequent.

Hooker, like his betters, had found other objects in life, and was floating upwards towards very different spheres. Since his acquaintances, Mr. Childersleigh and Mr. Hemprigge, had founded their great Company, he had followed its rising fortunes with a covetous interest. As we saw in his conversation with his late mistress, he was not altogether unversed in City matters. The splendid prospects of the new venture appealed to the

avarice which is the virtue of well-regulated men of a certain age. But the caution, which is another of their qualities, had come into play, and he had stood hesitating long, while the mounting shares fretted him with the idea he was missing golden chances. At last, after long irresolution, he half decided to plunge, and so he began by gingerly immersing a toe.

He went to a broker's, instructed him to buy him a score of shares, and, while the order was in course of entering in the note-book, lost courage, and cut it down to ten.

"They've been going up steadily, and they're likely to keep rising, Mr. Hooker," somewhat unprofessionally remonstrated the broker. But Hooker was firm in his timidity.

Sure enough, next morning saw a rise of fifteen shillings, and Hooker was furious, as it was natural a careful man should be. To cut the story short, gains once tasted, he became insatiable for them, and ultimately staked all he possessed in the scheme, even to mortgaging his cottage and raising money on a bill of sale over his furniture. When he had drawn his legacy, he made no secret of the destination of its proceeds, and Mr. Rivington good-naturedly volunteered a word of counsel.

"It's nothing to me, of course, Mr. Hooker, but if I were you, I would be cautious. I daresay you may be taking your eggs to an excellent market, but eggs are brittle things at best. You know the proverb. Is it prudent to have them all in the same basket?"

"As for that, Mr. Childersleigh's doing it, and so is Mr. Hemprigge, and they're long-headed gentlemen, the one and the other."

"They know their own business best, and, at any rate, you must remember they carry the basket themselves. Does not that make a difference?"

But Hooker was not to be dissuaded; perhaps he had reasons for his confidence best known to himself, and certainly time, as it went on, gave him no reason to think he had bestowed it rashly. Having thus given himself a City interest he made himself a City man, collating, line by line, the City articles, in the different morning and evening journals. He took to dining each forenoon at "Bob's," a low-roofed, many-tabled refectory in a blind alley off Cornhill, where waiters, bustling through a perennial haze of chops and cabbage, served a circle of customers they had come to regard as friends. There he guarded an incognito, and the slight mystery about him, coupled with the reserve of his manner and his curt utterances, led to his being treated with considerable respect. As a distraction from the pleasures of the table, he used to produce a plethoric pocket-book, bursting with memoranda-laden slips, which he was always emendating with a massive silver pencil.

It delighted him to lounge past by the dead wall of the Bank, contemplating with affectionate interest the splendid façade of the Crédit Foncier of Turkey's premises opposite. Like the Grecian enamoured of the statue that had grown under his chisel, one would have imagined Hooker had taken the smiling figure of Plenty for the object of his senile loves,

and that he came with the punctuality of a man of business to sigh and smile at the feet of his colossal mistress.

Not unfrequently, too, he crossed the threshold, and what was more to the purpose, seemed to have made a conquest of the Manager. A shareholder's name was generally a passport to the presence of that gentleman, but Hooker, having found the way thither once, followed it often.

"What, Hooker, you here?" said Hugh, stretching out a friendly hand as he met the ex-butler coming along the corridor that led to Mr. Hemprigge's room. "Looking after your money, I suppose; and I'm very glad to hear you have so much to look after."

"Yes, Mr. Hugh," returned Hooker, respectfully. "I had been laying by from my bit of salary all the many years I lived with Miss Childersleigh, and I always put my savings out at interest."

Wages and service were words which Hooker felt now-a-days attached to some remote period of his existence. He had a dim recollection of having once condescended to menial offices, that was all.

"How the old rascal must have robbed!" was the calumnious and perhaps envious reflection that crossed Mr. Childersleigh's suspicious mind, to be swept away in the rush of more important matters.

But as chance would have it, not many days later the pair met again, pretty nearly at the same hour in precisely the same place. This time the coincidence struck Childersleigh. Hemprigge was accessible, certainly, but he valued his time as money, and he was not much in the practice of lavishing money on other people unless for valuable consideration. He nodded thoughtfully to Hooker, who acknowledged the salutation with a silently respectful bow; walked into the manager's room, where he was going at any rate, and remarked abruptly to that gentleman,—

"By the way, I have just met Miss Childersleigh's old servant in your passage. Been using his privileges as a shareholder, I suppose?"

Childersleigh's City experiences were perhaps sharpening his wits into that baneful state of mind popularly known as too clever by half. This faithful colleague of his had become the object of undefined suspicion, which even such a trifle as this double meeting with Hooker served to awaken. He looked sharply as he spoke, and it struck him he detected some embarrassment. Perhaps it may have occurred to Hemprigge that the last time Hooker had favoured him with a call, Mr. Childersleigh also had followed it with another before the visitor could have cleared the stairs. At any rate he did not reply for a moment or two, while he busied himself arranging some papers. Then, to be sure, he spoke with a charming candour.

"I beg your pardon, but these are the notes about that advance to the Littas on their powder-mills at Scutari. I was anxious there should be no confusion when I submit them to the Board. But you were speaking of Hooker. Oh yes, to be sure, to tell the truth, the old gentleman is rather exacting, and I have had him with me once or twice lately. You know, of course, he has put every shilling he has into our shares. His

anxiety amuses me, but it's becoming rather much of a good thing; I think I really must give him a hint. Only we are such very old friends, Hooker and I; I used to see him often when he came to Rivington's on his mistress's business. Do you know, he's a remarkably shrewd old gentleman, and his supreme confidence in us touches me, and ought to flatter you. He believes in you more than in any man living."

"I should be greatly obliged to him, I'm sure," laughed Hugh, while he thought to himself, "It's all very well, and very unlike you, and why in the world make such a long story about it, my good friend?" and he went on aloud—

"That loan to the Littas was just what I was coming to talk to you about. Who are they insured with, and have our agents seen the policy?" And for the time Childersleigh dropped Hooker, to all appearance, while he talked business.

Hooker for some time had made pretty free use of the permission to pay his respects at "The Cedars," that he had craved and obtained when he handed the young ladies into their brougham at Harley Street. Even in the earlier days, when he had tried cultivating cabbages at his Camberwell cottage, he used to make frequent pilgrimages to Hampstead. Sir Basil had seen and condescended to him, propitiated by his respectful deference, and thinking moreover *richesse* obliged his taking some notice of a deserving inferior who had made himself a capitalist in his humble way.

The young ladies had received him oftener, but the faithful Hooker made slight secret in the housekeeper's room of his preference for his old housemate Lucy. The favourable notice of a man of Mr. Hooker's consequence gave the housekeeper at "The Cedars" a far higher opinion of our friend Lucy than she had had before. She spoke of it, too, and it came to Miss Maude's ears, with whom, at least, it did Hooker no harm; and to Miss Lucy's, who, now that she was fairly out of his reach, had half forgotten her prejudices, and was frequently smitten with remorse at the ingratitude with which she had repaid his kindness. Yet all this notwithstanding, when one of those formal visits of his was announced, she always did her best to be chaperoned to the interview.

"Really, Lucy, he's your admirer. He makes no secret that it's you he honours with his preference, and *I* should only disturb your *tête-à-tête*. No, seriously, I dislike the man, and I don't see why I should put myself out of my way for him."

"Not for him, you know, it's for me."

"Well, but why see him if you don't wish to? If you only do it because you feel you ought, I think he forces the duty on you much oftener than there's any need for."

"I don't know. I certainly wonder he should care to come; but if he does, I think I ought to see him."

"Always 'ought,' Lucy. Well, see him then," said Maude, austerely.

Lucy tried to catch her friend's eye, failed, sighed very audibly,

walked with much demonstration to the door, closed it behind her deliberately, and moved very quietly along the passage, as if she had hoped something from her mute eloquence.

Before she had taken half-a-dozen of her leisurely steps, there was a rush as of wings and a rustle of muslin, and she was overtaken by her relenting friend, who, it must be confessed, was getting to spoil her abominably. Then Hooker would make a few respectfully affectionate inquiries, talk a little deferential commonplace, and the interview would come to an end. Things always passed, from the first scene to the last, much in the same fashion. But still he came, and although it was only at unfrequent intervals he sent up his name to the ladies, he remained a frequent and an honoured guest in the housekeeper's room long after he had dropped most of the friends that linked him to the days of his servitude.

"Such an interest, to be sure, as old Mr. Hooker do take in you, Miss Lucy," the housekeeper often observed. "How his tongue do run on when once it gets upon you."

It was her own tongue that ran, while Mr. Hooker, who was far from voluble, had the knack of turning the stream of words in the direction he desired.

"I'm sure I should be very grateful to him," thought Lucy. But the more she tried the less she succeeded, and the profoundest depths of her consciousness whispered she never should, unless, indeed, Mr. Hooker were to crown his attentions by removing himself altogether from the scene.

CHAPTER XIX.

Killoden.

Setting himself to his match against time, Hugh had meant to do all he could to win it. Yet he knew well that too great haste might only mean the worse speed. Body and brain had been strained, but, although one and the other had stood it well, prudence whispered it was time to give them a holiday. The toughest yew will lose its spring with constant straining; the swiftest yacht may risk the race by cracking on with too much tophamper. The season was over and gone; the House had voted its latest estimates; the Ministers had eaten the last of the whitebait; the innocents had been Heroded; the Members had scattered like the fragments of a shell; the Scotch and Irish expresses were conveying their first-class passengers six and eight in a carriage; the west was as a city of the dead; the city had gone to the sea in promiscuous exodus; and Hugh had half made up his mind to follow the multitude. The craft he had launched was sailing summer seas with favouring breezes and plenty of them, and with an easy mind he could trust her for a time to other hands. Hemprigge had the requisite skill, and, for his own sake, must

steer her safely, for he had freighted her with all his fortunes. Then there were one or two watchful directors seated at the Aulic Council of the Board, who, as Hugh had found, might be trusted to keep intelligent eyes on the officer of the watch.

"Nonsense, Hugh, I tell you, you must and shall have a holiday."

So spoke George Childersleigh, who, feeling that his friend was already decided to yield so much, was only eager to get over that preliminary point, and persuade him as to his destination. The two were smoking their after-dinner cigars in Hugh's sanctum in Harley Street.

"Admitting it, just for the sake of argument," responded Hugh, sinking back luxuriously in the embraces of his chair, and languidly contemplating the ceiling through the ascending smoke,—"admitting I must; *après*, where am I to go?"

"You want change of life, and change of scene, fresh air, and plenty of it; the swing of the table and the run of the cellar, without the fear of a reproving conscience and an avenging morrow."

"You could scarcely put it more materially or truthfully."

"Thank you; well then, come to us at Killoden. You'll find them all there, every one of them."

To tell the truth, Hugh had quite made up his mind he should be asked to Killoden, as he often had been before, and had pretty nearly decided that, if asked, he would go. But, in luxurious sympathy with the general *abandon* of his body, his mind, and his surroundings, he coyly coquetted with the invitation.

"Many thanks, George; as you very well know there's nothing I should like better. But, even in making holiday, business must be considered before pleasure; Killoden's a long way from town. Letters take no end of a time to reach one there. No telegraph——"

"No, thank heaven," interrupted George, impatiently cutting him short, "no telegraphs, nor metropolitan deliveries a dozen times a day, nor barrel-organs, nor beggars, nor evening parties, nor evening papers. For the post, which is all you need care about, you'll have a chance of having your digestion spoiled with bad news, only thirty-six hours stale, every morning at breakfast. Better that than leaving your correspondents to take flying shots at you, as you dodge them over the Swiss passes and down among the Italian lakes. You don't dream, I imagine, of an English watering-place,—looking out for ships and dirty weather through a race-glass, drifting about the beach in a crowd of cockneys like a shred of old seaweed, and with about as much pleasure in life? Maclachlan writes he never saw stronger coveys, or more of them; the ground looks as if disease hadn't touched it for a century."

"Sir Basil may have filled his house. I know its accommodation well, and now Miss Winter's of the family, there's a room the less."

"He gave me special charge to persuade you, so if you're driven back on that position, you may as well surrender at discretion. Moreover, Purkiss won't be of the party. He commands in Lombard Street in the

Governor's absence,—an inducement the less for you to come, by the way, but that can't be helped."

"One must take the rough with the smooth in this world," remarked Hugh, gravely. "Well, George, if nothing turns up to prevent me, I'm your man—the more so, that if you have to turn me out, I'm pretty safe to find quarters over with McAlpine and Rushbrook at Baragoil."

"We shan't give them the chance, don't hope it. But what do you mean by talking of Rushbrook at Baragoil?"

"You haven't heard? Why, old McAlpine was in despair because he couldn't find a tenant for his Carradale forest; and the other day, after a Board meeting, proposed, half in fun, to Rushbrook, that he should go him halves in the whole stretch, Carradale and Baragoil, grouse and deer, while they kept house together at the Lodge. The pair have become great allies. Rushbrook jumped at the idea; and what began in joke ended in earnest. Then Barrington—you know all about his good-luck by the way—persuaded them to take him into the partnership, conditionally on his obtaining leave of absence from his uncle."

"By Jove, I'm delighted to hear we shall have such pleasant neighbours. It's something in the Highlands to have the materials for a rubber at your door."

"Highland neighbours, and quite at your door! It's seven miles of hill to Baragoil, if it's a yard!"

"Fully. Nothing at all, you see. Well, Hugh, we'll look for you by the eleventh at latest. It's no use asking you sooner; and, moreover, I don't think we shall be there ourselves many days before."

"You generally travel unattached, George. May we not as well go down together? We'll make up a party with Barrington and McAlpine, and pick up Rushbrook *en route*."

"Well, no; I think not," hesitated George. "The fact is, the Governor begins to fight shy of these long journeys, and I promised to do the dutiful this time, and take him and the girls in charge."

"Quite right too. Very well, then, we meet at Killoden on the eleventh; that's arranged. Now that my mind's made up, I shall be horribly put out if anything comes to upset my plans."

Nor were these by any means mere words of civility. All other attractions apart that the visit might have for Hugh, an invitation to Killoden was not a thing to be lightly declined. There were lower-lying moors, where you might have bloodier days and heavier bags, but nowhere could you enjoy in a higher perfection the poetry of sport. The place was a wild jumble of mountain and valley, hill and corrie, lying high on the water-shed of the Atlantic,—a very palace of the storms where the doors stood generally ajar; a reservoir of water when the sluices were raised, with scarce a warning, on the sunniest of summer days. A dead calm, deepening, if possible, to a deader stillness, a fitful puff or two, a black cloud that glided swiftly up against the sun, a rush of wind, a thunder-shower tumbling in sheets of water, and again a flood of warm,

mellow sunshine, that found everything brighter than before: that was the sort of thing you had there, weather as changeful as the scenery, skies whose sapphire blue was as treacherous as the emerald green of the moss-pits. When it did not subside into one of its fits of sullen steady weeping, or fly out in one of its savage windy bursts of temper that lasted for days, there was a charm in its very fickleness. It was the frowns that made you so keenly enjoy the smiles, and in your memories you carried away the sunshine and forgot the storm.

The country was grandly savage. What cultivation there was looked pitiably conscious of a false position, and its rickety existence generally ended in a premature death. Here and there you saw some misguided patch of oats, where the sand or peat had been lightly stirred round a keeper's cottage, strongly fenced against the marauding deer, who regarded, as a supreme delicacy, the crop a Saxon donkey would have sneered at. Killoden, although no forest, lay surrounded by the sacred haunts of the red deer, and seduced by its rich mountain pastures, they might be seen in the grey morning, streaming homewards ghostlike, over the passes. Through the day venturesome harts were to be found lying out in the enemy's country, although sheep, or sheep-dogs, kept them ever on the alert, and the friendly grouse-cocks made the stalking them more uncertain work than was altogether pleasurable.

There was luxurious shooting for elderly gentlemen in the deep heather by the lakes and streams, where the well-broke shooting pony picked his way demurely, while the setters ranged and quartered to the wave of the keeper's hand. There were the higher and more distant beats, sore strains on muscles flaccid from City pavements, but where the air came breathing round the sportsman in a rush of health, and where, even wrestling up the brae in the teeth of the bitter blast, you drew indomitable strength from the very enemy that set you so hard. If you never bagged a feather richly repaid toil it was—Highland scenery should be enjoyed with the gun, as Lowland landscapes from the saddle. There were gorges where mountain streams came leaping down rocky staircases, tumbling and flashing into pools of black water in white cascades of foam, past rocks glowing with orange lichens, and boulders cushioned with velvet moss. Here you shot your way up some *cul-de-sac* to the foot of the grey precipice that stopped it; there you dropped down into some hill-locked nook, entering it with dogs and death, waking its echoes with the horrid breech-loader, and scaring the lotus-picking covey from the calm enjoyment of life in the heathery Eden.

As you rose ridge on ridge, you opened hill on hill, buttresses of the grim old giants of geographical name, with their bare scalps, weather-driven foreheads, and the gaunt rocky shoulders that tore huge rents through their mantles of green and purple. Mountain hares, sheltered by myriads in their stony skirts, and ptarmigan flitted about in flocks among the grey wrinkles time had worn in their features. And all the picturesque "vermin" life was there. Highland foxes kenneled in the

cairns, and from the rocks and the fallen boulders you heard the cry of the marten and mountain cats. The raven hovered over the gorges with sullen croak; the peregrine's breast glinted on the shivered cliffs above; a pair of ospreys had established their household gods on the truncated rock in the lake below; while, greatest of all, soared and swooped the golden eagle, hunting to supply the larder on the ledge where the grim pledges of his flinty nuptial couch sat gaping in their rocky cradle.

All this, and much more besides, came rushing vividly on Hugh's mind when he gave George his promise to go and enjoy it. As he sat dallying with his cigar after his friend had left him, he might have been in a western opium-smoker's heaven, his mind detached itself so absolutely to go wandering among the old scenes and the familiar hunting-grounds. Again he rehearsed to their minutest incident long-forgotten stalks; again he snapped wild shots at grouse topping the hill-crest, and black-game shooting rocket-like down the wind. He breathed Highland air in his den in Harley Street, and in the thickening wreaths of his cigar-smoke saw the Atlantic mists stealing round him from the hills. In short, hugging himself in the prospect of a holiday, he felt all the premonitory symptoms of a *mal d'Ecosse* and a holiday longing that went on gradually growing until it threatened to be a grave disease. Possibly the prospects of the society to be enjoyed at the Lodge, with no *arrière-pensée* of work neglected, or dragging back from the collar, might have counted for something in his dreams of pleasure; but if there was danger impending to his peace of mind he altogether declined to look it in the face. He meant to leave his cares behind him, and began to shake himself clear of them at once. The moment he consented to slip the string the bow seemed to fly back of itself. Almost for the first time since he had taken to it, business became an effort and a drudgery; he began to count the days and then the hours; and we question whether, in his frame of mind, the prudent Mr. Childersleigh would not have found sophistry to persuade himself that a crisis in the money-market was a thing of no consequence whatever.

RABY FOUND GRACE CARDEN WITH HER HEAD BURIED ON HER TOILET [illegible]

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

APRIL, 1870.

Put Yourself in His Place.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MEANTIME the history of Raby House was the history of what French dramatists call "a pious lie."

Its indirect effect in keeping Grace Carden apart both from Mrs. Little and Jael Dence was unforeseen and disastrous; its immediate and direct effect on Mrs. Little was encouraging to those concerned: what with the reconciliation to her brother, the return to native air and beloved scenes, the tenderness and firmness of Jael Dence, and the conviction that her son was safe out of the clutches of the dreaded Unions, she picked up flesh and colour and spirit weekly.

By-and-by she turned round upon Jael Dence, and the nurse became the pupil. Mrs. Little taught her grammar, pronunciation, dancing, carriage and deportment. Jael could already sing from notes; Mrs. Little taught her to accompany herself on the pianoforte. The teacher was so vigilant, and the pupil so apt and attentive, that surprising progress was made. To be sure they were together night and day.

This labour of love occupied Mrs. Little's mind agreeably, and, as the

pupil was equally resolute in making the teacher walk or ride on horseback with her every day, the hours glided swiftly, and, to Mrs. Little, pleasantly.

Her brother rather avoided her, by order of Jael Dence; but so many probable reasons were given for his absences, that she suspected nothing. Only she said one day, "What a gad-about he is now. This comes of not marrying. We must find him a wife."

When he was at home they breakfasted together, all three, and then Mrs. Little sometimes spoke of Henry, and so hopefully and cheerfully, that a great qualm ran through her hearers, and Raby, who could not command his features so well as Jael could, looked gloomy, and sometimes retired behind his newspaper.

Mrs. Little observed this one day and pointed it out to Jael. "Oh," said Jael, "take no notice. You know he wanted Mr. Henry to stay quietly here and be his heir."

"And so did I. But his very name seems to——"

"He likes him well for all that, ma'am; only he won't own it yet. You know what Squire is."

"*The* Squire you should say, dear. But 'Mr. Raby' is better still. As a rule, avoid all small titles: the Doctor, the Squire, the Baronet, the Mayor."

Jael seized this handle, and, by putting questions to her teacher, got her away from the dangerous topic.

Ever on the watch, and occupied in many ways with Mrs. Little, Jael began to recover resignation; but this could not be without an occasional paroxysm of grief.

These she managed to hide from Mrs. Little.

But one day that lady surprised her crying. She stood and looked at her a moment, then sat down quietly beside her and took her hand. Jael started and feared discovery.

"My child," said Mrs. Little, "if you have lost a father you have gained a mother; and then, as to your sister, why my Henry is gone to the very same country; yet, you see, I do not give way to sorrow. As soon as he writes, I will beg him to make inquiries for Patty, and send them home if they are not doing well." Then Mrs. Little kissed Jael, and coaxed her and rocked with her, and Jael's tears began to flow, no longer for her own great grief, but for this mother, who was innocently consoling her, unconscious of the blow that must one day fall upon herself.

So matters went on pretty smoothly; only one morning, speaking of Henry, Mrs. Little surprised a look of secret intelligence between her brother and Jael Dence. She made no remark at the time, but she puzzled in secret over it, and began at last to watch the pair.

She asked Raby at dinner one day, when she might hope to hear from Henry.

"I don't know," said he, and looked at Jael Dence, like a person watching for orders.

Mrs. Little observed this, and turned keenly round to Jael.

"Oh," said Jael, "the Doctor—I beg pardon, Doctor Amboyne—can tell you that better than I can. It is a long way to Australia."

"How you send me from one to another," said Mrs. Little, speaking very slowly.

They made no reply to that, and Mrs. Little said no more. But she pondered all this. She wrote to Doctor Amboyne, and asked him why no letter had come from Henry.

Doctor Amboyne wrote back that, even if he had gone in a steamboat, there was hardly time for a letter to come back; but he had gone in a sailing vessel. "Give him three months and a half to get there, and two months for his letters to come back."

In this same letter he told her he was glad to hear she was renewing her youth like an eagle, but reminded her it would entail some consequences more agreeable to him than to her.

She laid down the letter with a blush and fell into a reverie.

Doctor Amboyne followed up this letter with a visit or two, and urged her to keep her promise and marry him.

She had no excuse for declining; but she procrastinated; she did not like to marry without consulting Henry, or, at least, telling him by letter.

And whilst she was thus temporizing, events took place at Eastbank which ended by rudely disturbing the pious falsehood at Raby Hall.

That sequence of events began with the interview between Mr. Carden and Mr. Coventry at Woodbine Villa.

"Little had made a will. My own solicitor drew it, and holds it at this moment." This was the intelligence Coventry had to communicate.

"Very well; then now I shall know who is coming to the 'Gosshawk' for the five thousand pounds. That will be the next act of the comedy, you will see."

"Wait a moment. He leaves to Mrs. Little his own reversion to a sum of nineteen hundred pounds; in which she has already the life-interest: he gives a hundred pounds to his sweetheart Dence: all the rest of his estate, in possession, or expectation, he bequeaths to—— Miss Carden."

"Good heavens!—Why then——" Mr. Carden could say no more, for astonishment.

"So," said Coventry, "if he is alive, she is the confederate who is to profit by the fraud; those five thousand pounds belong to her at this moment."

"Are you sure? Who is your authority?"

"A communicative clerk, who happens to be the son of a tenant of mine. The solicitor himself, I believe, chooses to doubt his client's decease. It is at his private request that horrible object is refused Christian burial."

"On what grounds, pray?"

"Légal grounds, I suppose; the man did not die regularly, and

according to precedent. He omitted to provide himself with two witnesses previously to being blown up. In a case of this kind we may safely put an old-fashioned attorney's opinion out of the question. What do *you* think? That is all I care to know."

"I don't know what to think now. But I foresee one thing: I shall be placed in rather an awkward position. I ought to defend the 'Gosshawk;' but I am not going to rob my own daughter of five thousand pounds, if it belongs to her honestly."

"Will you permit me to advise you?"

"Certainly, I shall be very much obliged; for really I don't see my way."

"Well, then, I think you ought to look into the matter carefully, bu without prejudice. I have made some inquiries myself; I went down to the works, and begged the workmen, who knew Little, to examine the remains, and then come here and tell us their real opinion."

"Oh, to my mind, it all depends on the will. If that answers the description you give—Hum!"

Next morning they breakfasted together, and, during breakfast, two workmen called, and, at Coventry's request, were ushered into the room. They came to say they knew Mr. Little well, and felt sure that was his dead hand they had seen at the Town Hall. Coventry cross-examined them severely, but they stuck to their conviction; and this will hardly surprise the reader when I tell him the workmen in question were Cole and another, suborned by Coventry himself, to go through this performance.

Mr. Carden received the testimony readily, for the best of all reasons —he wanted to believe it.

But, when they were gone, he recurred to the difficulty of his position. Director of the "Gosshawk," and father to a young lady who had a claim of five thousand pounds on it, and that claim debateable, though, to his own mind, no longer doubtful.

Now Mr. Coventry had a great advantage over Mr. Carden here: he had studied this very situation profoundly for several hours; and at last had seen how much might be done with it.

He began by artfully complimenting Mr. Carden on his delicacy, but said Miss Carden must not be a loser by it. "Convince her, on other grounds, that the man is dead; encourage her to reward my devotion with her hand, and I will relieve you of everything disagreeable. Let us settle on Miss Carden, for her separate use, the five thousand pounds, and anything else derivable from Mr. Little's estate; but we must also settle my farm of Hindhope; for it shall never be said she took as much from that man as she did from me. Well, in due course I apply to the 'Gosshawk' for my wife's money. I am not bound to tell your Company it is not mine but hers: that is between you and me. But you really ought to write to London at once and withdraw the charge of fraud; you owe that piece of justice to Miss Carden, and to the memory of the deceased."

"That is true; and it will pave the way for the demand you propose to make on Mrs. Coventry's behalf. Well, you really are a true friend, as well as a true lover."

In short, he went back to Hillsborough resolved to marry his daughter to Coventry as soon as possible. Still following that gentleman's instructions, he withheld from Grace that Little had made a will in her favour. He knew her to be quite capable of refusing to touch a farthing of it, or to act as executrix. But he told her the workmen had identified the remains, and that other circumstances had also convinced him he had been unjust to a deceased person, which he regretted.

When her father thus retracted his own words, away went Grace's last faint hope that Henry lived; and now she must die for him, or live for others.

She thought of Jael Dence, and chose the latter.

Another burst or two of agony, and then her great aim and study appeared to be to forget herself altogether. She was full of attention for her father, and, whenever Mr. Coventry came, she laboured to reward him with kind words, and even with smiles; but they were sad ones.

As for Coventry, he saw, with secret exultation, that she was now too languid and hopeless, to resist the joint efforts of her father and himself, and that, some day or other, she must fall lifeless into his arms.

He said to himself, "It is only a question of time."

He was now oftener at the villa than at Hillsborough, and, with remarkable self-denial, adhered steadily to the line of soothing and unobtrusive devotion.

One morning at breakfast the post brought him a large envelope from Hillsborough. He examined it, and found a capital "L" in the corner of the envelope, which "L" was written by his man Lally, in compliance with secret instructions from his master.

Coventry instantly put the envelope into his pocket, and his hand began to shake so that he could hardly hold his cup to his lips. His agitation, however, was not noticed.

Directly after breakfast he strolled, with affected composure, into the garden, and sat down in a bower where he was safe from surprise, as the tangled leaves were not so thick but he could peep through them.

He undid his enclosure, and found three letters; two were of no importance; the third bore a foreign post-mark, and was addressed to Miss Carden in a handwriting, which he recognized at a glance as Henry Little's.

But, as this was not the first letter from Henry to Grace, which he had intercepted and read, perhaps I had better begin by saying a few words about the first.

Well, then, the letters with which Coventry swam the river on the night of the explosion were six, viz. to Mr. Bolt, to Doctor Amboyne, to Mr. Baynes, to Jael Dence, to Mrs. Little, and to Grace Carden. The letter to Grace Carden was short, but touching, full of devotion, hope, resolution,

and grief at parting. He told her he had come to take leave that afternoon, but she had been out, luckily; for he felt he ought to go, and must go, but how could he look at her and then leave her? This was the general purport, and expressed with such anguish and fortitude as might have melted a heart of marble.

The reader may have observed that, upon his rival's disappearance, Coventry was no happier. This letter was the secret cause. First, it showed him his rival was alive, and he had wasted a crime; secondly, it struck him with remorse, yet not with penitence; and to be full of remorse, yet empty of that true penitence which confesses or undoes the wrong, this is to be miserable.

But, as time rolled on, bringing the various events I have related, but no news of Little, Coventry began to think that young man must really have come to some untimely end.

From this pleasant dream he was now awakened by the second intercepted letter. It ran thus:—

"Boston, U. S., June 20th.

"My own dear Love,—

"It is now nine weeks since I left England, and this will be a fortnight more getting to you; that is a long time for you to be without news from me, and I sadly fear I have caused you great anxiety. Dearest, it all happened thus. Our train was delayed by an accident, and I reached Liverpool just in time to see the steam-packet move down the Mersey. My first impulse, of course, was to go back to Hillsborough; but a seaman, who saw my vexation, told me a fast schooner was on the point of sailing for Boston, U. S. My heart told me if I went back to Hillsborough, I should never make the start again. I summoned all my manhood to do the right thing for us both; and I got into the schooner, heaven knows how; and, when I got there, I hid my face for ever so many hours, till, by the pitching and tossing, I knew that I was at sea. Then I began to cry and blubber. I couldn't hold it any longer.

"At such a time a kind word keeps the heart from breaking altogether; and I got some comfort from an old gentleman, a native of Boston: a grave old man he was, and pretty reserved with all the rest; but, seeing me in the depths of misery, he talked to me like a father, and I told him all my own history, and a little about you too,—at least, how I loved you, and why I had left England with a heavy heart.

"We had a very long passage, not downright tempestuous, but contrary winds, and a stiff gale or two. Instead of twenty days, as they promised, we were six weeks at sea, and what with all the fighting and the threats—I had another letter signed with a coffin just before I left that beautiful town—and the irritation at losing so much time on the ocean, it all brought on a fever, and I have no recollection of leaving the boat. When I came to myself, I was in a house near Boston, belonging to the old gentleman I spoke of. He and his nieces nursed me, and now I am as well as ever, only rather weak.

"Mr. Ironside, that is his name, but it should be Mr. Goldheart, if I had the christening of him, he has been my good Samaritan. Dear Grace, please pray for him and his family every night. He tells me he comes of the pilgrim fathers, so he is bound to feel for pilgrims and wanderers from home. Well, he has been in patents a little, and, before I lost my little wits with the fever, he and I had many a talk. So now he is sketching out a plan of operation for me; and I shall have to travel many a hundred miles in this vast country. But they won't let me move till I am a little stronger, he and his nieces. If he is gold they are pearls.

"Dearest, it has taken me two days to write this; but I am very happy and hopeful, and do not regret coming. I am sure it was the right thing for us both.

"Please say something kind for me to the good doctor, and tell him I have got over this one trouble already.

"Dearest, I agreed to take so much a year from Bolt, and he must fight the trades alone; such a life is not worth having; Bayne won't wrong me of a shilling; whatever he makes, over his salary and the men's wages, there it will be for me, when I come home; so I write to no one at Hillsborough but you; indeed, you are my all in this world; I travel, and fight, and work, and breathe, and live for you, my own beloved, and if any harm came to you, I wouldn't care to live another moment."

At this point in the letter, the reader stopped, and something cold seemed to pass all through his frame. It struck him that all good men would pity the writer of this letter, and abhor him who kept it from that pale, heart-broken girl inside the cottage.

He sat freezing, with the letter in his hand, and began to doubt whether he could wade any deeper in crime.

After a minute or two he raised his head, and was about to finish reading the letter.

But, in the meantime, Grace Carden had resumed her accustomed place in the verandah. She lay upon the couch, and her pale face, and hollow, but still beautiful eyes, were turned seaward. Out of those great sad eyes, the sad soul looked across the waste of waters,—gazed, and searched, and pined in vain. Oh, it was a look to make angels weep, and hover close over her head with restless, loving pinions, longing to shadow, caress, and heal her.

Coventry, with Henry Little's letter in his hand, peered through the leaves, and saw the woman he loved fix this look of despair upon the sea,—despair, of which he was the sole cause, and could dispel it with a gesture.

"And this brings me back to what is my only great trouble now. I told you, in the letter I left behind me, you would hear from me in a month at farthest. It will be not a month but eleven weeks. Good heavens! when I think what anxiety you may have suffered on my account! You know I am a pupil of the good doctor, and so I put myself in your place, and I say to myself, 'If my Grace had promised to

write in a month, and eleven weeks had passed without a word, what would my feelings be?' Why, I think I should go mad; I should make sure you were ill; I should fear you were dead; I should fancy every terrible thing on earth, except that you were false to your poor Henry. That I should never fear: I judge you by myself. Fly steamboat with this letter to my love, and set her mind at ease. Fly back with a precious word from her dear hand, and, with that in my bosom, nothing will ever daunt me.

"God bless you! Angel of my life, darling of my heart, star on which all my hopes are fixed! Oh, what miserable bad tools words are! When I look at them, and compare them with how I love you, I seem to be writing that I love you no more than other people love. What I feel is so much greater than words.

"Must I say farewell? Even on paper, it is like tearing myself away from heaven again. But that was to be: and now this is to be. Good-by, my own beloved.

"Yours till death,

"Henry."

Coventry read this, sentence by sentence, still looking up, nearly every sentence, at her, to whom it was addressed.

The letter pleaded on his knee, the pale face pleaded a few yards off; he sat between the two bleeding lovers, their sole barrier and bane.

His heart began to fail him. The mountain of crime looked high. Now remorse stung him deeper than ever; jealousy spurred him harder than ever; a storm arose within his breast, a tempest of conflicting passion, as grand and wild as ever distracted the heart; as grand and wild as any poet has ever tried to describe, and, half succeeding, won immortal fame.

"See what I can do!" whispered conscience. "With one bound I can give her the letter, and bring the colour back to that cheek and joy to that heart. She will adore me for it, she will be my true and tender friend till death. She will weep upon my neck and bless me."

"Ay," whispered jealousy, "and then she will marry Henry Little."

"And am I sure to succeed if I persist in crime? Deserve her hatred and contempt, and is it certain they will not both fall on me?"

"The fault began with them. He supplanted me—she jilted me. I hate him—I love her. I can't give her up now; I have gone too far. What is intercepting a letter? I have been too near murder to stop at that."

"But her pale face! her pale face!"

"Once married, supplant him as he has supplanted you. Away to Italy with her. Fresh scenes—constant love—the joys of wedlock! What will this Henry Little be to her then?—a dream."

"Eternal punishment! if it is not a fable, who has ever earned it better than I am earning it if I go on?"

"It *is* a fable; it must be. Philosophers always said so, and now even divines have given it up."

"Her pale face! her pale face! Never mind *him*, look at *her*. What sort of love is this that shows no pity? Oh, my poor girl, don't look so sad—so pale! What shall I do? Would to God I had never been born, to torture myself and her."

His good angel fought hard for him that day; fought and struggled and hoped, until the miserable man, torn this way and that, ended the struggle with a blasphemous yell by tearing the letter to atoms.

That fatal act turned the scale.

The next moment he wished he had not done it.

But it was too late. He could not go to her with the fragments. She would see he had intercepted it purposely.

Well, all the better. It was decided. He would not look at her face any more. He could not bear it.

He rushed away from the bower and made for the seaside; but he soon returned another way, gained his own room, and there burnt the fragments of the letter to ashes.

But, though he was impenitent, remorse was not subdued. He could not look Grace Carden in the face now. So he sent word he must go back to Hillsborough directly.

He packed his bag and went downstairs with it.

On the last landing he met Grace Carden. She started a little.

"What! going away?"

"Yes, Miss Carden."

"No bad news, I hope," said she, kindly.

The kindly tone coming from her, to whom he had shown no mercy, went through that obdurate heart,

"No—no," he faltered; "but the sight of your unhappiness—— Let me go. I am a miserable man."

And with this he actually burst out crying and ran past her.

Grace told her father, and asked him to find out what was the matter with Mr. Coventry.

Mr. Carden followed Coventry to the station, and Coventry, who had now recovered his self-possession and his cunning, told him that for some time Miss Carden had worn a cheerful air, which had given him hopes; but this morning, watching her from a bower in the garden, he had seen such misery in her face that it had quite upset him; and he was going away to try and recover that composure, without which he felt he would be no use to her in any way.

This tale Carden brought back to his daughter, and she was touched by it. "Poor Mr. Coventry," said she. "Why does he waste so much love on me?"

Her father, finding her thus softened, pleaded hard for his friend, and reminded Grace that she had not used him well. She admitted that at once, and went so far as to say that she felt bound never to marry any

one but Mr. Coventry, unless time should cure him, as she hoped it would, of his unfortunate attachment.

From this concession Mr. Carden urged her daily to another, viz. that Mr. Coventry might be permitted to try and win her affection.

Her answer was, "He had much better content himself with what I can and do give him: my esteem and gratitude and sincere pity."

Mr. Carden, however, persisted, and the deep affection he had shown his daughter gave him great power. It was two against one; and the two prevailed.

Mr. Coventry began to spend his whole time at Eastbank Cottage.

He followed Grace about with a devotion to which no female heart could be entirely insensible; and, at last, she got used to him, and rather liked to have him about her. He broke her solitude as a dog does, and he fetched and carried for her, and talked when she was inclined to listen, and was silent when he saw his voice jarred upon her bereaved heart.

Without her father, matters might have gone on so for years; but Mr. Carden had now so many motives for marrying his daughter to Coventry, that he used all his judgment and all his influence. He worked on his daughter's pride, her affection, her sense of honour, and her sense of duty.

She struggled, she sighed, she wept; but, by little and little, she submitted. And, since three months more passed with no striking event, I will deviate from my usual custom and speak a little of what passed in her mind.

First of all, then, she was so completely deceived by appearances, that she believed the exact opposite of the truth in each particular. To her not only did black seem white, but white black. Her dead lover had given her but half his heart. Her living lover was the soul of honour and true devotion. It was her duty, though not her pleasure, to try and love him; to marry him would be a good and self-denying action.

And what could she lose by it? Her own chance of happiness was gone. All she could hope for hereafter was the gentle satisfaction that arises from making others happy. She had but a choice of evils: never to marry at all, or to marry Frederick Coventry.

Thus far she was conscious of her own feelings, and could, perhaps, have put them into words; but here she drifted out of her depth.

Nature implants in women a genuine love of offspring that governs them unconsciously. It governs the unconscious child; it governs the half-conscious mother who comes home from the toyshop with a waxen child for her girl, and a drum for her boy.

Men desire offspring—when they desire it at all—from vanity alone. Women desire it from pure love of it.

This instinct had probably its share in withholding Grace from making up her mind never to marry; and so operated negatively, though not positively, in Coventry's favour.

And so, by degrees and in course of time, after saying "no" a dozen

times, she said "yes" once in a moment of utter lassitude, and afterwards she cried and wished to withdraw her consent, but they were two to one, and had right on their side she thought.

They got her to say she would marry him some day or other.

Coventry intercepted several letters, but he took care not to read them with Grace's sad face in sight. He would not give conscience such a power to torment him. The earlier letters gave him a cruel satisfaction. They were written each from a different city in the United States, and all tended to show that the writer had a year or two to travel yet, before he could hope to return home in triumph and marry his Grace.

In all these letters she was requested to send her answers to New York, (and, now I think of it, there was a postscript to that effect in the very letter I have given in extenso.)

But at last came a letter that disturbed this delightful dream. It was written from the western extremity of the States, but the writer was in high spirits; he had sold his patents in two great cities, and had established them in two more on a royalty; he had also met with an unexpected piece of good fortune: his railway clip had been appreciated, a man of large capital and enterprise had taken it up with spirit, and was about to purchase the American and Canadian right for a large sum down and a percentage. As soon as this contract should be signed he should come home and claim Mr. Carden's promise. He complained a little that he got no letters, but concluded the post-office authorities were in fault, for he had written to New York to have them forwarded; however, he should soon be in that city and revel in them.

This troubled Coventry, and drove him to extremities. He went on his knees to Grace, and implored her to name the day.

She drew back with horror and repugnance; said, with a burst of tears, she was a widow, and would not marry till a decent time had elapsed since——; then, with sudden doggedness, "I will never marry at all."

And so she left him to repent his precipitation.

He was at his wit's end, and could do nothing but look unhappy, and temporize, and hope the wind might change.

The wind did not change, and he passed a week or two of outward sorrow, but inward rage.

He fell ill, and Mr. Carden pitied him openly.

Grace maintained a sullen silence.

One day, as he was in bed, an envelope was brought him, with a large "L." He opened it slowly, fearing the worst.

The letter was full of love, and joy, and triumph, that made the reader's heart faint within him, till he came to this sentence:—

"The gentleman who treats with me for the railway clip, makes it an express stipulation that I shall spend a month in his works at Chicago,

superintending the forging and perfecting of the clip. As he intends to be there himself, and to buy it out and out if it answers his expectations, I shall certainly go, and wear a smith's apron once more for your sake. He is even half inclined to go into another of my projects—the forging of large axes by machinery. It was tried at Hillsborough two years ago, but the Union sent a bullet through the manufacturer's hat, and he dropped it."

The letter, from which I give this extract, was a reprieve. He had five or six weeks before him still.

Soon after this, his faithful ally, Mr. Carden, worked on Grace's pity; and as Coventry never complained, nor irritated her in any way, she softened to him. Then all the battery of imploring looks was brought to bear on her by Coventry, and of kind admonition and entreaty by her father; and so, between them, they gently thrust her down the slope.

"Stop all their tongues," said Mr. Carden. "Come back to Hillsborough a wife. I gave up my choice to yours once. Now give me my way. I am touched to the heart by this young man's devotion: he invites me to live with him when you are married. What other young fellow would show me so much mercy?"

"Does he?" said Grace. "I will try and reward him for that, and for speaking well of one who could not defend himself. But give me a little time."

Mr. Carden conveyed this to Coventry with delight, and told him he should only have another month or so to wait. Coventry received this at first with unmixed exultation, but by and by he began to feel superstitious. Matters were now drawing to such a point that Little might very well arrive before the wedding-day, and just before it. Perhaps heaven had that punishment in store for him; the cup was to be in his very grasp, and then struck out of it.

Only a question of time! But what is every race? The space between winner and loser strikes the senses more obviously; but the race is just as much a question of time as of space. Buridan runs second for the Derby, defeated by a length. But give Buridan a start of one second, and he shall beat the winner—by two lengths.

Little now wrote from Chicago that everything was going on favourably, and he believed it would end in a sale of the patent clip in the United States and Canada for 50,000 dollars, but no royalty.

This letter was much shorter than any of the others; and, from that alone, his guilty reader could see that the writer intended to follow it in person almost immediately.

Coventry began almost to watch the sun in his course. When it was morning he wished it was evening, and when it was evening he wished it was morning.

Sometimes he half wondered to see how calmly the sun rose and set, and Nature pursued her course, whilst he writhed in the agony of suspense, and would gladly have given a year out of his life for a day.

At last, by Mr. Carden's influence, the wedding-day was fixed. But soon after this great triumph came another intercepted letter. He went to his room, and his hands trembled violently as he opened it.

His eye soon fixed on this passage:—

"I thought to be in New York by this time, and looking homewards; but I am detained by another piece of good fortune, if anything can be called good fortune that keeps me a day from you. Oh, my dear Grace, I am dying to see your handwriting at New York, and then fly home and see your dear self, and never, never quit you more. I have been wonderfully lucky; I have made my fortune, our fortune. But it hardly pays me for losing the sight of you so many months. But what I was going to tell you is that my method of forging large axes by machinery is wonderfully praised, and a great firm takes it up on fair terms. This firm has branches in various parts of the world, and, once my machines are in full work, Hillsborough will never forge another axe. Man cannot suppress machinery; the world is too big. That bullet sent through Mr. Tyler's hat loses Great Britain a whole trade. I profit in money by their short-sighted violence, but I must pay the price; for this will keep me another week at Chicago, perhaps ten days. Then home I come, with lots of money to please your father, and an ocean of love for you, who don't care about the filthy dross; no more do I, except as the paving-stones on the road to you and heaven, my adored one."

The effect of this letter was prodigious. So fearful had been the suspense, so great was now the relief, that Coventry felt exultant, buoyant. He went down to the seaside, and walked, light as air, by the sands, and his brain teemed with delightful schemes. Little would come to Hillsborough soon after the marriage; but what of that? On the wedding-night he would be at Dover. Next day at Paris, on his way to Rome, Athens, Constantinople. The inevitable exposure should never reach his wife until he had so won her, soul and body, that she should adore him for the crimes he had committed to win her,—he knew the female heart to be capable of that.

He came back from his walk another man, colour in his cheek, and fire in his eye.

He walked into the drawing-room, and found Mr. Raby, with his hat on, just leaving Grace, whose eyes showed signs of weeping.

"I wish you joy, sir," said Raby. "I am to have the honour of being at your wedding."

"It will add to my happiness, if possible," said Coventry.

To be as polite in deed as in word, he saw Mr. Raby into the fly.

"Curious creatures these girls," said Raby, shrugging his shoulders.

"She was engaged to me long ago," said Coventry, parrying the blow.

"Ah! I forgot that. Still—well, well; I wish you joy."

He went off, and Coventry returned to Grace. She was seated by the window, looking at the sea.

"What did Godpapa say to you?"

"Oh, he congratulated me. He reminded me you and I were first engaged at his house."

"Did he tell you it is to be at Woodbine Villa?"

"What?"

"The wedding." And Grace blushed to the forehead at having to mention it.

"No, indeed, he did not mention any such thing, or I should have shown him how unadvisable——"

"You mistake me. It is *I* who wish to be married from my father's house, by good old Doctor Fynes. He married my parents, and he christened me, and now he shall marry me."

"I approve that, of course, since you wish it; but, my own dearest Grace, Woodbine Villa is associated with so many painful memories—let me advise, let me earnestly entreat you, not to select it as the place to be married from. Dr. Fynes can be invited here."

"I have set my heart on it," said Grace. "Pray do not thwart me in it."

"I should be very sorry to thwart you in anything. But, before you finally decide, pray let me try and convince your better judgment."

"I *have* decided; and I have written to Doctor Fynes, and to the few persons I mean to invite; they can't all come here; and I have asked Mr. Raby; and it is my own desire; and it is one of those things the lady and her family always decide. I have no wish to be married at all. I only marry to please my father and you. There, let us say no more about it, please. I will not be married at Woodbine Villa, nor anywhere else. I wish papa and you would show your love by burying me instead."

These words, and the wild and panting way they were uttered in, brought Coventry to his knees in a moment. He promised her, with abject submission, that she should have her own way in this and everything. He petted her, and soothed her, and she forgave him, but so little graciously, that he saw she would fly out in a moment again, if the least attempt were made to shake her resolution.

Grace talked the matter over with Mr. Carden, and that same evening he begged Coventry to leave the Villa as soon as he conveniently could, for he and his daughter must be there a week before the wedding, and invite some relations, whom it was his interest to treat with respect.

"You will spare me a corner," said Coventry, in his most insinuating tone. "Dear Woodbine! I could not bear to leave it."

"Oh, of course you can stay there till we actually come; but we can't have the bride and bridegroom under one roof. Why, my dear fellow, you know better than that."

There was no help for it. It sickened him with fears of what might

happen in those few fatal days, during which Mr. Carden, Grace herself, and a household over which he had no control, would occupy the house, and would receive the postman, whose very face showed him incorruptible.

He stayed till the last moment; stopped a letter of five lines from Little, in which he said he should be in New York very soon, en route for England; and the very next day he received the Cardens, with a smiling countenance, and a fainting heart, and then vacated the premises. He ordered Lally to hang about the Villa at certain hours when the post came in, and do his best. But this was catching at a straw. His real hope was that neither Little himself, nor a letter in his handwriting, might come in that short interval.

It wanted but five days to the wedding.

Hitherto, it had been a game of skill,—now it was a game of chance; and every morning he wished it was evening, every evening he wished it was morning.

The day Raby came back from Eastbank, he dined at home, and, in an unguarded moment, said something or other, on which Mrs. Little cross-examined him so swiftly and so keenly, that he stammered, and let out Grace Carden was on the point of marriage.

"Marriage, while my son is alive!" said Mrs. Little, and looked from him to Jael Dence, at first with amazement, and afterwards with a strange expression, that showed her mind was working.

A sort of vague alarm fell upon the other two: and they waited, in utter confusion, for what might follow.

But the mother was not ready to suspect so horrible a thing as her son's death. She took a more obvious view, and inveighed bitterly against Grace Carden.

She questioned Raby as to the cause; but it was Jael who answered her. "I believe nobody knows the rights of it, but Miss Carden herself."

"The cause is her utter fickleness: but she never really loved him. My poor Henry!"

"Oh yes, she did," said Raby. "She was at death's door a few months ago."

"At death's door for one man, and now going to marry another!"

"Why not?" said Raby, hard pushed; "she is a woman."

"And why did you not tell me till now?" asked Mrs. Little, loftily ignoring her brother's pitiable attempt at a sneer.

Raby's reply to this was happier.

"Why, what the better are you for knowing it now? We had orders not to worry you unnecessarily. Had we not, Jael?"

"That is all very well, in some things. But, where my son is concerned, pray never keep the truth from me again. When did she break off with Henry? or did he quarrel with her?"

"I have no idea. I was not in the country."

"Do *you* know, dear?"

"No, Mrs. Little. But I am of your mind. I think she could not have loved Mr. Henry as she ought."

"When did you see her last?"

"I could not say justly: but it was a long while ago."

Mrs. Little interpreted this that Jael had quarrelled with Grace for her fickleness, and gave her a look of beaming affection; then fell into a dead silence, and soon tears were seen stealing down her cheek.

"But I shall write to her," said she, after a long and painful silence.

Mr. Raby hoped she would do nothing of the kind.

"Oh! I shall not say much. I shall put her one question. Of course *she* knows why they part."

Next morning Jael Dence asked Mr. Raby whether the threatened letter must be allowed to go.

"Of course it must," said Raby. "I have gone as far off the straight path as a gentleman can. And I wish we may not repent our ingenuity. Deceive a mother about her son! what can justify it after all?"

Mrs. Little wrote her letter, and showed it to Jael:—

"Dear Miss Carden, — They tell me you are about to be married. Can this be true, and Henry Little alive?"

An answer came back, in due course:—

"Dear Mrs. Little,—It is true: and I am miserable. Forgive me, and forget me."

Mrs. Little discovered the marks of tears upon the paper, and was sorely puzzled.

She sat silent a long time: then, looking up, she saw Jael Dence gazing at her with moist eyes and an angelic look of anxiety and affection.

She caught her round the neck, and kissed her, almost passionately.

"All the better," she cried, struggling with a sob. "I shall have my own way for once. You shall be my daughter instead."

Jael returned her embrace with ardour, but in silence, and with averted head.

When Jael Dence heard that Grace Carden was in Hillsborough, she felt very much drawn to go and see her: but she knew the meeting must be a sad one to them both; and that made her put it off till the very day before the wedding. Then, thinking it would be too unkind if she held entirely aloof, and being, in truth, rather curious to know whether Grace had really been able to transfer her affections in so short a time, she asked Mr. Raby's leave, and drove one of the ponies in to Woodbine Villa.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The short interval previous to the wedding-day passed, to all appearance, as that period generally does. Settlements were drawn, and only awaited signature. The bride seemed occupied with dress, and receiving visits and presents, and reading and writing letters of that sort which ought to be done by machinery.

The bridegroom hovered about the house, running in and out on this or that pretext.

She received his presence graciously, read him the letters of her female friends, and forced herself to wear a look of languid complacency, especially before others.

Under all this routine she had paroxysms of secret misery; and he was in tortures.

These continued until the eve of the wedding, and then he breathed freely. No letter had come from the U. S., and to-morrow was the wedding-day. The chances were six to one no letter came that day, and, even if one should, he had now an excuse ready for keeping Lally on the premises that particular morning. At one o'clock he would be flying south with his bride.

He left the villa to dress for dinner. During this interval, Jael Dence called.

The housemaid knocked at Grace's door—she was dressing—and told her Jael wished to see her.

Grace was surprised and much disturbed. It flashed on her, in a moment, that this true and constant lover of Henry Little had come to enjoy her superiority; she herself had greatly desired this meeting, once; but now it could only serve to mortify her. The very thought that this young woman was near her set her trembling; but she forced herself to appear calm, and, turning to her maid, said, "Tell her I can see no one to-day."

The lady's-maid gave this message to the other servant, and she went downstairs with it.

The message, however, had not been gone long when the desire to put a question to Jael Dence returned strongly upon Grace Carden.

She yielded to an uncontrollable impulse, and sent her maid down to say that she would speak to Jael Dence, in her bedroom, the last thing at night.

"The last thing at night!" said Jael, colouring with indignation; "and where am I to find a bed after that?"

"Oh," said the late footman, now butler, "you shall not leave the house. I'll manage that for you with the housekeeper."

At half-past eleven o'clock that night, Grace dismissed her maid, and told her to bring Jael Dence to her.

Jael came, and they confronted each other once more.

"You can go," said Grace to the maid.

They were alone, and eyed each other strangely.

"Sit down," said Grace, coldly.

"No, thank you," said Jael, firmly. "I shall not stay long after the way I have been received."

"And how did you expect to be received?"

"As I used to be. As a poor girl who once saved *his* life, and nearly lost her own, through being his true and faithful servant."

"Faithful to him, but not to me."

Jael's face showed she did not understand this.

"Yes," said Grace, bitterly, "you are the real cause of my marrying Mr. Coventry, whom I don't love, and never can love. There, read that. I can't speak to you. You look all candour and truth; but I know what you are; all the women in that factory knew about you and him—read that." She handed her the anonymous letter, and watched her like an eagle.

Jael read the poison, and coloured a little; but was not confounded.

"Do you believe this, Miss Carden?"

"I did not believe it, at first; but too many people have confirmed it. Your own conduct has confirmed it, my poor girl. This is cruel of me."

"Never mind," said Jael, resolutely. "We have gone too far to stop. My conduct! What conduct, if you please?"

"They all say that, when you found he was no more, you attempted self-destruction."

"Ah!" cried Jael, like a wounded hare; "they must tell you that!" and she buried her face in her hands.

Now this was a young woman endowed by nature with great composure, and a certain sobriety and weight; so, when she gave way like that, it produced a great effect on those who knew her.

Grace sighed, and was distressed. But there was no help for it now. She awaited Jael's reply, and Jael could not speak for some time. She conquered her agitation, however, at last, and said, in a low voice,—"Suppose you had a sister, whom you loved dearly—and then you had a quarrel with her, and neither of you much to blame, the fault lay with a third person; and suppose you came home suddenly, and found that sister had left England in trouble, and gone to the other end of the world—would not that cut you to the heart?"

"Indeed it would. How correctly you speak. Now who has been teaching you?"

"Mrs. Little."

"Ah!"

"You *have* a father. Suppose you left him for a month, and then came back and found him dead and buried—think of that—buried!"

"Poor girl!"

"And all this to fall on a poor creature just off a sick bed, and scarcely right in her head. When I found poor Mr. Henry was dead,

and you at Death's door, I crawled home for comfort, and there I found desolation: my sister gone across the sea, my father in the churchyard. I wandered about all night, with my heavy heart, and distraught brain, and at last they found me in the river: they may say I threw myself in, but it is my belief I swooned away and fell in. I wouldn't swear though, for I remember nothing of it. What does it prove against me?"

"Not much, indeed, by itself. But they all say you were shut up with him for hours."

"And that is true; ten hours, every day. He was at war with these trades, and his own workman had betrayed him; he knew I was as strong as a man at some kinds of work,—of course I can't strike blows, and hurt people, like a man,—so he asked me, would I help him grind saws with his machine on the sly, clandestinely I mean. Well, I did, and very easy work it was, child's play to me that had wrought on a farm: he gave me six pounds a week for it. That's all the harm we did together; and, as for what we said, let me tell you a first-rate workman, like poor Mr. Henry, works very silently; that is where they beat us women. I am sure we often ground a dozen saws, and not a word, except upon the business. When we did talk, it was sure to be about you. Poor lad, the very last time we wrought together, I mind he said, 'Well done, Jael, that's good work; it brings me an inch nearer *her*.' And I said, All the better, and I'd give him another hour or two every day if he liked. That very evening I took him his tea at seven o'clock. He was writing letters; one was to you. He was just addressing it. 'Good-night, Jael,' said he. 'You have been a good friend to her and me.'"

"Oh! did he say that? What became of that letter?"

"Upon my soul he did: ay, and it was his last word to me in this world. But you are not of his mind, it seems. The people in the factory! I know they used to say we were sweethearts; you can't wonder at that; they didn't know about you, nor any of our secrets; and, of course, vulgar folk like them could not guess the sort of affection I had for poor Mr. Henry; but a lady like you should not go by their lights. Besides, I was always open with you. Once I had a different feeling for him: did I hide it from you? When I found he loved you, I set to work to cure myself; I did cure myself, before your very eyes; and, after that, you ought to be ashamed of yourself to go and doubt me. There now, I have made her cry."

Her own voice faltered a moment, and she said, with gentle dignity, "Well, I forgive you, for old kindness past; but I shall not sleep under this roof now. God bless you, and give you many happy days yet with this gentleman you are going to marry. Farewell."

She was actually going; but Grace caught her by the arm. "No, no, you shall not leave me so."

"Ay, but I will." And Jael's eyes, so mild in general, began to sparkle with anger, at being detained against her will; but, generous to the last, she made no use of her great strength to get clear from Grace.

"You will not go, if you are the woman you were. I believe your words, I believe your honest face, I implore your forgiveness. I am the most miserable creature in this world. Pray do not abandon me."

This appeal, made with piteous gestures, and streaming eyes, overpowered Jael Dence, and soon they were seated, rocking together, and Grace pouring out her heart.

Jael then learned, to her dismay, that Grace's belief in Henry's falsehood was a main cause of this sudden marriage. Had she believed her Henry true, she would have mourned him, as a widow, two years at least.

The unhappy young lady lamented her precipitation; and the idea of marrying Mr. Coventry to-morrow became odious to her. She asked Jael wildly, whether she should not be justified in putting an end to her life.

Jael consoled her all she could; and, at her request, slept in the same bed with her. Indeed she was afraid to leave her; for she was wild at times, and said she would prefer to be married to that dead hand people said was at the Town Hall, and then thrown into one grave with it. "That's the bridal I long for," said she.

In the morning she was calmer, and told Jael she thought she was doing right.

"I shall be neither more nor less wretched for marrying this poor man," said she: "and I shall make two people happy; two people that deserve the sacrifice I make."

So, after all, the victim went calmly.

Early in the morning came a letter from Doctor Fynes. He was confined by gout, and sorry to say the ceremony he had hoped to perform, must be done by his curate.

Now this curate was quite a stranger to Grace, and indeed to most people in Hillsborough. Doctor Fynes himself knew nothing about him except that he had come in answer to his inquiry for a curate, had brought good letters of recommendation, and had shown himself acquainted with the learned doctor's notes to *Apollonius Rhodius*; on which several grounds the doctor, who was himself a better scholar than a priest, had made him his curate, and had heard no complaints, except from a few puritanical souls; these he looked on as barbarians, and had calmly ignored them and their prejudices, ever since he transferred his library from St. John's College Cambridge to St. Peter's Rectory, and that was thirty years ago.

This sudden substitute of an utter stranger for Doctor Fynes afflicted Grace Carden not a little, and her wedding-day began with a tear or two on that account. But, strange as it may appear, she lived to alter her mind, and to thank and bless Mr. Beresford for taking her old friend's place on that great occasion.

But, while the bride dressed for church, and her bridesmaids and friends drove up, events were taking place, to deal with which I must retrograde a step.

Jael Dence having gone to "Woodbine Villa," Mrs. Little and her brother dined tête-à-tête; and the first question she asked was, "Why, where is Jael?"

"Don't you know? gone to 'Woodbine Villa.' The wedding is to-morrow."

"What, my Jael gone to that girl's wedding!" And her eyes flashed with ire.

"Why not? I am going to it myself."

"I am sorry to hear you say so; very sorry."

"Why, she is my godchild. Would you have me affront her?"

"If she is your godchild, Henry is your nephew."

"Of course, and I did all I could to marry him to Grace: but, you see, he would be wiser than me."

"Dear Guy, my poor Henry was to blame, for not accepting your generous offer: but that does not excuse this heartless, fickle girl."

Raby's sense of justice began to revolt. "My dear Edith, I can't bear to hear you speak so contemptuously of this poor girl, who has so nearly died for love of your son; she is one of the noblest, purest, most unselfish creatures I ever knew. Why judge so hastily? But that is the way with you ladies: it must be the woman who is in the wrong. Men are gods, and women devils; that is your creed."

"Is *Henry* going to marry another?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then what excuse can there be for her conduct? Does wrong become right, when this young lady does it? It is you who are prejudiced, not I. Her conduct is without excuse. I have written to her: she has replied, and has offered me no excuse. 'Forgive me,' she says, 'and forget me.' I shall never forgive her; and you must permit me to despise her for a few years before I forget her."

"Well, don't excite yourself so: my poor Edith, some day or other you will be sorry you ever said a word against that amiable and most unfortunate girl."

He said this so sadly and solemnly that Mrs. Little's anger fell directly, and they both sat silent a long time.

"Guy," said Mrs. Little, "tell me the truth. Has my son done anything wrong—anything rash? It was strange he should leave England without telling me. He told Doctor Amboyne. Oh, there is some mystery here! If I did not know you so well, I should say there is some deceit going on in this house. There *is*——You hang your head. I cannot bear to give you pain, so I will ask you no more questions. But——"

There was a world of determination in that "but."

She retired early to bed; to bed, but not to rest.

In the silence of the night she recalled every thing, every look, every word that had seemed a little strange to her, and put them all together.

She could not sleep, vague misgivings crawled over her agitated mind; at length she slumbered from sheer exhaustion. She rose early; yet, when she came downstairs, Raby was just starting for Woodbine Villa.

Mrs. Little asked him to take her into Hillsborough. He looked uneasy, but complied; and, at her desire, set her down in the market-place of Hillsborough. As soon as he was out of sight she took a fly, and directed the driver to take her to Mr. Little's works. "I mean," said she, "the works where Mr. Bayne is."

She found Mr. Bayne in his counting-house, dressed in deep mourning.

He started at sight of her, and then she saw his eye fall with surprise on her grey dress.

"Mr. Bayne," said she, "I am come to ask you a question or two."

"Be seated, madam," said Bayne, reverently. "I expected a visit from you or from your agent; and the accounts are all ready for your inspection. I keep them as clear as possible."

"I do not come here about accounts. My son has perfect confidence in you, and so have I."

"Thank you, madam; thank you kindly. He did indeed honour me with his confidence, and with his friendship. I am sure he was more like a brother to me than an employer. Ah, madam! I shall never, never, see his fellow again." And honest Bayne turned away with his hand to his eyes.

This seemed to Mrs. Little to be more than the occasion required, and did not tend to lessen her misgivings. However, she said gravely, "Mr. Bayne, I suppose you have heard there is to be a wedding in the town to-day? Miss Carden?"

"That is sudden! No, madam, I didn't know it. I can hardly believe it."

"It is so. She marries a Mr. Coventry. Now I think you were in my son's confidence; can you tell me whether there was any quarrel between him and Miss Carden before he left us?"

"Well, madam, I didn't see so much of him lately, he was always at the other works. Would to heaven he had never seen them. But I don't believe he ever gave that lady an unkind word: he was not that sort; he was ready of his hand against a man, but a very lamb with women he was. And so she is going to marry? Well, well; the world it must go round. She loved him dearly, too. She was down at Bolt and Little's works day after day searching for him. She spent money like water, poor thing! I have seen her with her white face and great eyes watching the men drag the river for him; and, when that horrible thing was found at last, they say she was on the bridge and swooned dead away, and lay at death's door. But you will know all this, madam; and it is sad for me to speak of, let alone you that are his mother."

The colour died out of Mrs. Little's cheek as he spoke; but, catching now a glimpse of the truth, she drew Bayne on with terrible cunning, and so learned that there had been a tremendous explosion, and Jael Dence taken

up for dead; and that, some time after, an arm and a hand had been found in the river and recognized for the remains of Henry Little.

When she had got this out of the unwary Bayne she uttered a piercing scream, and her head hung over the chair, and her limbs writhed, and the whole creature seemed to wither up.

Then Bayne saw with dismay what he had done, and began to falter out expressions of regret.

She paid no attention.

He begged her to let him fetch her some salts or a cordial.

She shook her head, and lay weak as water and white as a sheet.

At last she rose, and, supporting herself for a moment by the back of the chair, she said, "You will take me to see my son's remains."

"Oh, for heaven's sake don't think of it!"

"I must; I cannot keep away from them an instant. And how else can I know they are his? Do you think I will believe any eye but my own?—Come."

He had no power to disobey her. He trembled in every limb at what was coming, but he handed her into her carriage, and went with her to the Town Hall.

When they brought her the tweed sleeves she trembled like an aspen leaf. When they brought her the glass receptacle she seized Bayne by the shoulder, and turned her head away. By degrees she looked round, and seemed to stiffen all of a sudden. "It is not my son," said she.

She rushed out of the place, bade Mr. Bayne good-morning, and drove directly to Doctor Amboyne. She attacked him at once. "You have been deceiving me all this time about my son; and what am I the better? what is anybody the better? Now tell me the truth. You think him dead?"

(Doctor Amboyne hung his head in alarm and confusion.)

"Why do you think so? Do you go by those remains? I have seen them. My child was vaccinated on the left arm, and carried the mark. He had specks on two of his finger-nails: he had a small wart on his little finger: and his fingers were not blunt and uncouth, like that; they were as taper as any lady's in England: that hand is nothing like my son's; you are all blind; yet you must go and blind the only one who had eyes, the only one who really loved him, and whose opinion is worth a straw."

Doctor Amboyne was too delighted at the news to feel these reproaches very deeply. "Thank God!" said he. "Scold me, for I deserve it. But I did for the best; but, unfortunately, we have still to account for his writing to no one all this time. No matter. I begin to hope. *That* was the worst evidence. Edith, I must go to Woodbine Villa. That poor girl must not marry in ignorance of this. Believe me, she will never marry Coventry, if *he* is alive. Excuse my leaving you at such a time, but there is not a moment to be lost."

He placed her on a sofa, and opened the window; for, by a natural

reaction, she was beginning to feel rather faint. He gave his housekeeper strict orders to take care of her, then, snatching his hat, went hastily out.

At the door he met the footman with several letters (he had a large correspondence), shoved them pell-mell into his breast-pocket, shouted to a cabman stationed near, and drove off to "Woodbine Villa."

It was rather up-hill, but he put his head out of the window and offered the driver a sovereign to go fast. The man lashed his horse up the hill, and did go very fast, though it seemed slow to Doctor Amboyne, because his wishes flew so much faster.

At last he got to the villa, and rang furiously.

After a delay, that set the Doctor stamping, Lally appeared.

"I must see Miss Carden directly."

"Step in, sir; she won't be long now."

Doctor Amboyne walked into the dining-room, and saw it adorned with a wealth of flowers, and the wedding-breakfast set out with the usual splendour; but there was nobody there; and immediately an uneasy suspicion crossed his mind.

He came out into the passage, and found Lally there.

"Are they gone to the church?"

"They are," said Lally, with consummate coolness.

"You Irish idiot!" roared the Doctor; "why couldn't you tell me that before?" And, notwithstanding his ungainly figure, he ran down the road, shouting, like a Stentor, to his receding cabman.

"Bekase I saw that every minute was goold," said Lally, as soon as he was out of hearing.

The cabman, like most of his race, was rather deaf and a little blind, and Doctor Amboyne was much heated and out of breath before he captured him. He gasped out, "To St. Peter's Church, for your life!"

It was rather down-hill this time, and about a mile off.

In little more than five minutes the cab rattled up to the church door.

Doctor Amboyne got out, told the man to wait, and entered the church with a rapid step.

Before he had gone far up the centre aisle, he stopped.

Mr. Coventry and Grace Carden were coming down the aisle together in wedding costume, the lady in her bridal veil.

They were followed by the bridesmaids.

Doctor Amboyne stared, and stepped aside into an open pew to let them pass.

They swept by; he looked after them, and remained glued to his seat till the church was clear of the procession.

He went into the vestry, and found the curate there.

"Are that couple really married, sir?" said he.

The curate looked amazed. "As fast as I can make them," said he, rather flippantly.

"Excuse me," said the doctor, faintly. "It was a foolish question to ask."

"I think I have the honour of speaking to Doctor Amboyne?"

Doctor Amboyne bowed, mechanically.

"You will be at the wedding-breakfast, of course?"

"Humph!"

"Why, surely you are invited."

"Yes," (with an equally absent air.)

Finding him thus confused, the sprightly curate laughed, and bade him good-morning, jumped into a hansom, and away to Woodbine Villa.

Doctor Amboyne followed him slowly.

"Drive me to Woodbine Villa. There's no hurry now."

On the way, he turned the matter calmly over, and put this question to himself.—Suppose he had reached the villa in time to tell Grace Carden the news! Certainly he would have disturbed the wedding; but would it have been put off any the more? The bride's friends and advisers would have replied, "But that is no positive proof that he is alive; and, if he is alive, he has clearly abandoned her. Not a line for all these months."

This view of the matter appeared to him unanswerable, and reconciled him, in a great degree, to what seemed inevitable.

He uttered one deep sigh of regret, and proceeded now to read his letters; for he was not likely to have another opportunity for an hour or two at least, since he must be at the wedding-breakfast. His absence would afflict the bride.

The third letter he took out of his breast-pocket bore an American postmark. At the first word of it he uttered an ejaculation, and his eye darted to the signature.

Then he gave a roar of delight. It was signed "Henry Little," and the date only twelve days old.

His first thought was the poor lady who, at this moment, lay on a sofa in his house, a prey to doubts and fears he could now cure in a moment.

But no sooner had he cast his eyes over the contents, than his very flesh began to creep with dire misgivings and suspicions.

To these succeeded the gravest doubts as to the course he ought to pursue at Woodbine Villa.

He felt pretty sure that Grace Carden had been entrapped into marrying a villain, and his first impulse was to denounce the bridegroom before the assembled guests.

But his cooler judgment warned him against acting in hot blood, and suggested it would he better to try and tell her privately.

And then he asked himself what would be the consequence of telling her.

She was a lady of great spirit, fire, and nobility. She would never live with this husband of hers.

And then came the question, what would be her life?

She might be maid, wife, and widow, all her days.

Horrible as it was, he began almost to fear her one miserable chance of happiness might lie in ignorance.

But then how long could she be in ignorance?

Little was coming home; he would certainly speak out.

Dr. Amboyne was more tormented with doubts than a man of inferior intellect would have been. His was an academic mind, accustomed to look at every side of a question: and, when he reached Woodbine Villa, he was almost distracted with doubt and perplexity. However, there was one person from whom the news must not be kept a moment. He took an envelope out of his pocket-book, and sent the cabman to Mrs. Little with this line:—

"Thank God, I have a letter from Henry Little by this day's post. He is well. Wait an hour or two for me. I cannot leave Woodbine Villa at present."

He sent this off by his cabman, and went into the breakfast-room in a state of mind easier to imagine than to describe.

The party were all seated, and his the only vacant place.

It was like a hundred other weddings at which he had been; and, seeing the bride and bridegroom seated together, as usual, and the pretty bridesmaids tittering, as usual, and the gentle dulness lighted up with here and there a feeble jest, as usual, he could hardly realize that horrible things lay beneath the surface of all this snowy bride-cake, and flowers, and white veils, and weak jocoseness.

He stared, bowed, and sank into his place, like a man in a dream.

Bridesmaids became magnetically conscious that an incongruous element had entered; so they tittered. At what does sweet silly seventeen not titter?

Knives and forks clattered, champagne popped, and Doctor Amboyne was more perplexed and miserable than he had ever been. He had never encountered a more hopeless situation.

Presently Lally came and touched the bridegroom. He apologized, and left the room a moment.

Lally then told him to be on his guard, for the fat doctor knew something. He had come tearing up in a fly, and had been dreadfully put out when he found Miss Carden was gone to the church.

"Well, but he might merely wish to accompany her to the church: he is an old friend."

Lally shook his head and said there was much more in it than that; he could tell by the man's eye, and his uneasy way. "Master, dear, get out of this, for heaven's sake, as fast as ye can."

"You are right; go and order the carriage round, as soon as the horses can be put to."

Coventry then went hastily back to the bridal guests, and Lally ran to the neighbouring inn which furnished the four post-horses.

Coventry had hardly settled down in his chair before he cast a keen but furtive glance at Doctor Amboyne's face.

Then he saw directly that the Doctor's mind was working, and that he was secretly and profoundly agitated.

But, after all, he thought, what could the man know? And if he had known anything, would he have kept it to himself?

Still he judged it prudent to propitiate Doctor Amboyne; so, when the time came for the usual folly of drinking healths, he leaned over to him, and, in the sweetest possible voice, asked him if he would do them both the honour to propose the bride's health.

At this unexpected call from Mr. Coventry, Doctor Amboyne stared in the bridegroom's face. He stared at him so that other people began to stare. Recovering himself a little, he rose mechanically, and surprised everybody who knew him.

Instead of the easy gaiety natural to himself, and proper to the occasion, he delivered a few faltering words of affection for the bride; then suddenly stopped, and, after a pause, said, "But some younger man must foretell her the bright career she deserves. I am unfit. We don't know what an hour may bring forth." With this he sank into his chair.

An uneasy grin, and then a gloom, fell on the bright company at these strange words, and all looked at one another uncomfortably.

But this situation was unexpectedly relieved. The young curate rose, and said, "I accept the honour Doctor Amboyne is generous enough to transfer to the younger gentlemen of the party,—accept it with pride."

Starting from this exordium he pronounced, with easy volubility, a charming panegyric on the bride, congratulated her friends, and then congratulated himself on being the instrument to unite her in holy wedlock with a gentleman worthy of her affection. Then, assuming for one moment the pastor, he pronounced a blessing on the pair, and sat down, casting glances all round out of a pair of singularly restless eyes.

The loud applause that followed left him in no doubt as to the favourable effect he had produced. Coventry, in particular, looked most expressively grateful.

The bridegroom's health followed, and Coventry returned thanks in a speech so neat and well delivered, that Grace felt proud of his performance.

Then the carriage and four came round, and Coventry gave Grace an imploring glance on which she acted at once, being herself anxious to escape from so much publicity. She made her curtsies and retired to put on her travelling-dress.

Then Doctor Amboyne cursed his own indecision, but still could not make up his mind, except to tell Raby and make him the judge what course was best.

The gaiety, never very boisterous, began to flag altogether; when suddenly a noise was heard outside, and one or two young people, who darted unceremoniously to the window, were rewarded by the sight of a man and a woman struggling and quarrelling at the gate. The disturb-

ance in question arose thus. Jael Dence, looking out of Grace's window, saw the postman coming, and ran to get Grace her letters (if any) before she went.

The postman, knowing her well, gave her the one letter there was.

Lally, returning from the inn, where he had stopped one unlucky minute to drain a glass, saw this, and ran after Jael and caught her just inside the gate.

"That is for me," said he, rudely.

"Nay, it's for thy betters, young man; 'tis for Miss Grace Carden."

"She is Mrs. Coventry now, so give it me."

"I'll take her orders first."

On this Lally grabbed at it and caught Jael's right hand, which closed directly on the letter like a vice.

"Are these your manners?" said she. "Give over now."

"I tell you I will have it," said he, fiercely, for he had caught sight of the handwriting.

He seized her hand and applied his knuckles to the back of it with all his force. That hurt her, and she gave a cry, and twisted away from him and drew back; then, putting her left hand to his breast, she gave a great yaw, and then a forward rush with her mighty loins, and a contemporaneous shove with her amazing left arm, that would have pushed down some brick walls, and the weight and strength so suddenly applied sent Lally flying like a feather. His head struck the stone gate-post, and he measured his length under it.

Jael did not know how completely she had conquered him, and she ran in with a face as red as fire, and took the letter up to Grace, and was telling her, all in a heat, about the insolence of her new husband's Irish servant, when suddenly she half recognized the handwriting, and stood staring at it, and began to tremble.

"Why, what is the matter?" said Grace.

"Oh, nothing, Miss. I'm foolish. The writing seems to me like a writing we shall never see again." And she stood and trembled still more, for the handwriting struck her more and more.

Grace ran to her, and, at the very first glance, uttered a shriek of recognition. She caught it from Jael, tore it open, saw the signature, and sank into a chair, half fainting, with the letter pressed convulsively to her breast.

Jael, trembling, but comparatively self-possessed, ran to the door directly, and locked it.

"My darling! my darling! he is alive. The dear words, they swim before my eyes. Read! read! tell me what he says. Why has he abandoned me? He has not abandoned me. Oh, God! what have I done? what have I done?"

Before that letter was half read, or rather sobbed, out to her, Grace tore off all her bridal ornaments, and trampled them under her feet, and moaned, and twisted, and writhed, as if her body was being tortured as

well as her heart; for Henry was true as ever, and she had married a villain.

She took the letter from Jael, and devoured every word; though she was groaning and sobbing with the wildest agony all the time.

"My own dearest Grace, New York, July 18.

"I write you these few lines in wonder and pain. I have sent you at least fifteen letters, and in most of them I have begged you to write to me at the Post-office, New York; yet not one line is here to greet me in your dear handwriting. Yet my letters must have all reached 'Woodbine Villa,' or why are they not sent back? Of three letters I sent to my mother, two have been returned from Aberystwith, marked, 'Gone away, and not left her address.'

"I have turned this horrible thing every way in my mind, and even prayed God to assist my understanding: and I come back always to the same idea, that some scoundrel has intercepted my letters.

"The first of these I wrote at the works on the evening I left Hillsborough; the next I wrote from Boston, after my long illness, in great distress of mind on your account; for I put myself in your place, and thought what agony it would be to me if nine weeks passed, and no word from you. The rest were written from various cities, telling you I was making our fortune, and should soon be home. Oh! I cannot write of such trifles now.

"My own darling, let me find you alive; that is all I ask. I know I shall find you true to me, if you are alive.

"Perhaps it would have been better if my heart had not been so entirely filled by you. God has tried me hard in some things, but He has blessed me with true friends. It was ungrateful of me not to write to such true friends as Doctor Amboyne and Jael Dence. But, whenever I thought of England, I saw only you.

"By this post I write to Doctor Amboyne, Mr. Bolt, Mr. Bayne, and Jael Dence.

"This will surely baffle the enemy who has stopped all my letters to you, and will stop this one, I daresay.

"I say no more, beloved one. What is the use? You will perhaps never see this letter, and you know more than I can say, for you know how I love you: and that is a great deal more than ever I can put on paper.

"I sail for England in four days. God help me to get over the interval.

"I forget whether I told you I had made my fortune.

"Your devoted and most unhappy lover,

"Henry."

Grace managed to read this, in spite of the sobs and moans that shook her, and the film that half blinded her; and, when she had read it, sank heavily down, and sat all crushed together, with hands working like phrenzy.

Jael kneeled beside her, and kissed and wept over her, unheeded.

Then Jael prayed aloud beside her—unheeded.

At last she spoke, looking straight before her, as if she was speaking to the wall.

"Bring my godfather here."

"Won't you see your father first?" said Jael, timidly.

"I have no father. I want something I can lean on over the gulf—a man of honour. Fetch Mr. Raby to me."

Jael kissed her tenderly, and wept over her once more, a minute, then went softly downstairs, and straight into the breakfast-room.

Here, in the meantime, considerable amusement had been created by the contest between Lally and Jael Dence, the more so on account of the triumph achieved by the weaker vessel.

When Lally got up, and looked about him ruefully, great was the delight of the younger gentlemen.

When he walked indoors, they chaffed him through the open window, and none of them noticed that the man was paler than even the rough usage he had received could account for.

This jocund spirit, however, was doomed to be shortlived.

Lally came into the room, looking pale and troubled, and whispered a word in his master's ear; then retired, but left his master as pale as himself.

Coventry, seated at a distance from the window, had not seen the scrimmage outside, and Lally's whispered information fell on him like a thunderbolt.

Mr. Beresford saw at once that something was wrong, and hinted as much to his neighbour. It went, like magic, round the table, and there was an uneasy silence.

In the midst of this silence, mysterious sounds began to be heard in the bride's chamber; a faint scream; feet rushing across the floor; a sound as of some one sinking heavily on to a chair or couch.

Presently came a swift stamping, that told a tale of female passion; and, after that, confused sounds, that could not be interpreted through the ceiling, yet, somehow, the listeners felt they were unusual. One or two attempted conversation, out of politeness; but it died away—curiosity and uneasiness prevailed.

Lally put his head in at the door, and asked if the carriage was to be packed.

"Of course," said Coventry; and soon the servants, male and female, were seen taking boxes out from the hall to the carriage.

Jael Dence walked into the room, and went to Mr. Raby.

"The bride desires to see you immediately, sir."

Raby rose, and followed Jael out.

The next minute, a lady's-maid came, with a similar message to Doctor Amboyne.

He rose with great alacrity, and followed her.

There was nothing remarkable in the bride's taking private leave of these two valued friends. But, somehow, the mysterious things that had preceded, made the guests look with half suspicious eyes into everything; and Coventry's manifest discomfiture, when Doctor Amboyne was sent for, justified this vague sense that there was something strange going on beneath the surface.

Neither Raby nor Amboyne came down again, and Mr. Beresford remarked aloud that the bride's room was like the lion's den in the fable, "'Vestigia nulla retrorsum.'"

At last, the situation became intolerable to Coventry. He rose, in desperation, and said, with a ghastly attempt at a smile, that he must, nevertheless, face the dangers of the place himself, as the carriage was now packed, and Mrs. Coventry and he, though loth to leave their kind friends, had a longish journey before them. "Do not move, I pray; I shall be back directly."

As soon as he had got out of the room, he held a whispered consultation with Lally, and then, collecting all his courage, and summoning all his presence of mind, he went slowly up the stairs, determined to disown Lally's acts (Lally himself had suggested this), and pacify Grace's friends, if he could; but, failing that, to turn round, and stand haughtily on his legal rights, ay, and enforce them too.

But, meantime, what had passed in the bride's chamber?

Raby found Grace Carden, with her head buried on her toilet-table, and her hair all streaming down her back.

The floor was strewn with pearls and broken ornaments, and fragments of the bridal veil. On the table lay Henry Little's letter.

Jael took it, without a word, and gave it to Raby.

He took it, and, after a loud ejaculation of surprise, began to read it.

He had not quite finished it, when Doctor Amboyne tapped at the door, and Jael let him in.

That crushed figure with dishevelled hair, and Raby's eye gleaming over the letter in his hand, told him at once what was going on.

He ceased to doubt, or vacillate, directly: he whispered Jael Dence to stand near Grace, and watch her closely.

He had seen a woman start up and throw herself, in one moment, out of a window, for less than this, a woman crushed apparently, and more dead than alive, as Grace Carden was.

Then he took out his own letter, and read it in a low voice to Mr. Raby; but it afterwards appeared the bride heard every word.

"My best Friend,

"Forgive me for neglecting you so long, and writing only to her I love with all my soul. Forgive me, for I smart for it. I have written fifteen letters to my darling Grace, and received no reply. I wrote her one yesterday, but have now no hope she will ever get it.

This is terrible, but there is worse behind. This very day, I have learned that my premises were blown up, within a few hours of my leaving, and poor, faithful Jael Dence nearly killed; and then a report of my own death was raised, and some remains found in the ruins, that fools said were mine. I suppose the letters I left in the box were all destroyed by the fire.

"Now, mark my words, one and the same villain has put that dead man's hand and arm in the river, and has stopped my letters to Grace; I am sure of it. So what I want you to do is, first of all, to see my darling, and tell her I am alive and well, and then put her on her guard against deceivers.

"I suspect the postman has been tampered with: I write to Mr. Ransome to look into that. But what you might learn for me, is, whether anybody lately has had any opportunity to stop letters addressed to 'Woodbine Villa.' That seems to point to Mr. Carden, and he was never a friend of mine. But, somehow, I don't think he would do it.

"You see, I ask myself two questions. Is there any man in the world who has a motive strong enough to set him tampering with my letters? and, again, is there any man base enough to do such an act? And the answer to both questions is the same. I have a rival, and he is base enough for anything. Judge for yourself. I as good as saved that Coventry's life, one snowy night, and all I asked in return was that he wouldn't blow me to the trades, and so put my life in jeopardy. He gave me his word of honour he wouldn't. But he broke his word. One day, when Grotait and I were fast friends, and never thought to differ again, Grotait told me this Coventry was the very man that came to him and told him where I was working. Such a lump of human dirt as that, for you can't call him a man, must be capable of anything."

Here the reading of the letter was interrupted by an incident.

There was, on the toilet-table, a stiletto, with a pearl handle; it was a small thing, but the steel rather long, and very bright and pointed.

The unfortunate bride, without lifting her head from the table, had reached out her hand, and was fingering this stiletto. Jael Dence went and took it gently away, and put it out of reach. The bride went on fingering, as if she had still got hold of it.

Amboyne exchanged an approving glance with Jael, and Raby concluded the letter.

"I shall be home in a few days after this; and, if I find my darling well and happy, there's no great harm done: I don't mind my own trouble and anxiety, great as they are: but if any scoundrel has made her unhappy, or made her believe I am dead, or false to my darling, by God I'll kill him, though I hang for it next day."

Crushed, benumbed, and broken as Grace Coventry was, this sentence seemed to act on her like an electric shock.

She started wildly up. "What! my Henry die like a felon—for a villain like him, and an idiot like me. You won't allow that; nor you—nor I."

A soft step came to the door, and a gentle tap.

"Who is that?" said Dr. Amboyne.

"The bridegroom," replied a soft voice.

"You can't come in here," said Raby, roughly.

"Open the door," said the bride.

Jael went to the door, but looked uncertain.

"Don't keep the bridegroom out," said Grace, reproachfully. Then, in a voice as sweet as his own, "I want to see him; I want to speak to him."

Jael opened the door slowly, for she felt uneasy. Raby shrugged his shoulders contemptuously at Grace's condescending to speak to the man, and in so amiable a tone.

Coventry entered, and began, "My dear Grace, the carriage is ready——"

No sooner had she got him fairly into the room, than the bride snatched up the stiletto, and flew at the bridegroom with gleaming eyes, uplifted weapon, the yell of a furious wild beast, and hair flying out behind her head like a lion's mane.

Sounding the Gong.

I was told of a man the other day who had a country-house invitation upon which he rather prided himself. It was not that the family was noble or even especially well-received in the county; there were no daughters of any beauty, nor any sons who were supposed to be unusually agreeable. But the house was very large, its master was reported to be very rich; the pictures were fine, the preserves abundantly stocked; men-servants and maid-servants were said to come in to prayers in the morning in numbers so considerable that they would have made a respectable congregation in a village church. What was glass in other houses was crystal there; what was china was the heaviest silver. The carpets were soft as velvet; the tapestry of the curtains was almost unique. It was all walnut and maple and oak; silk damask, cretonne chintz, and brocade; ormolu, Dresden china, and silver. In short, to put the matter figuratively, the whole place from roof to basement was "ceiled with cedar and painted with vermilion."

The visitor arrived—I think in some sort of open trap procured from the neighbourhood of the railway-station—and was received at the door by two persons, one in the regulation black and white, the other in very gorgeous apparel indeed. The day was cold, and the guest had travelled far, and, anxious to reach his room at once, he was conducted to it. The furniture was very choice; a little pinned over, perhaps, in its richest and most delicate parts, but showing enough of its native beauty to be striking. The guest entered, the door was softly closed behind him, and he found himself in the presence of the furniture, his portmanteau (considerately opened for him, of course), and a very reasonable quantity of hot water. There was no *fire*. Shivering with cold, he made the most of the hot water; and, with as much despatch as possible, prepared himself to meet the family. The welcome was warm enough, but the room was cold, and he earnestly desired dinner, for he was very hungry. Presently a charming sound met his ear—it was charming, and yet there was a sort of severity in it. It was the gong, and the person who struck it seemed to intimate, by the energy of his action, that the sound was intended to call those whom it might concern to no ordinary duty. There was just a suspicion of the spirit of "At what time ye hear, &c. &c.—well, but if not, &c. &c.," which would in any case have prevented hesitation; but in the present instance there was no temptation to it. The gong told the hour of dressing. Presently a sound still more stirring if possible, and still more welcome, told the hour of dinner. The lady of the house was conducted, and so was everything else, in the

most *recherché* manner. Served upon silver, and presented by those whose dresses were tagged with lace and glittering with gold, appeared tasteless soup, a little hashed mutton, a second day's entrée, and a cheese-cake. All, literally and entirely all,—unless, indeed, we mention fluids. There was very nice marsala at dinner, and, after the meal, claret and sherry. The claret, I think, cost 14*s.* the dozen; but the sherry was, perhaps, "that" at four-and-twenty.

It is evident that something can be written on this subject of "Sounding the Gong," which may go considerably beyond the literal circumstances. One might easily find oneself drifting into ethics and allegory, and "improving the occasion" without mercy. And I will not declare it to be impossible that some little effort in that direction may be made presently; at the same time, I have not quite done with the material "gong" yet.

It is notorious enough that, while the majority of men are really hospitable to their guests, many are not wanting who seem hardly to know what true hospitality means. Either they make you feel that you are *not at home* by hurrying you into this or that enjoyment, giving no sufficient time in which to prepare for it; or they give you a good dinner and no fire, or a fire and a bad dinner, or neither dinner nor fire; or they make you breakfast at a time which to you seems unearthly; or they send you to bed at half-past ten without the possibility of tobacco: all these things they do—all these things, at any rate, are done by them collectively. I remember a rather good tale, much to the point here, told me by a well-known "deputation" of the Curates' Aid Society. These travelling speakers are dependent upon the hospitality of the squire or the parson of the parish in which they "advocate the claims of the society." They very properly make it a rule, or next to a rule, never to go to an hotel; for doing so would, of course, diminish considerably the funds which they accumulate, and it is only just and right that the leading men in the parish—the clergyman most clearly—should offer all hospitality to the apostle who comes into it. The experience of these men, I need hardly say, is very extensive with regard to the matter on hand. Sometimes they fare sumptuously, sometimes moderately, occasionally very poorly indeed. The "deputation" of whom I have spoken had many little incidents to relate, the result of his great experience; and the one to which I just now referred is this:—A friend of his, a "deputation," was staying at a vicarage where it was difficult to obtain the necessaries of life, and impossible to procure the luxuries. The rooms were cold, the dinners raw, the wine wretched, the hours barbarous. The accustomed pipe, which so constantly was an introduction to the slumbers of our reverend friend, was wanting altogether; the one glass of hot grog was wanting also. These things were serious. But a "deputation" is not easily done, either on the platform or off it: and this gentleman at length showed himself equal to the occasion. For, one evening immediately after ten o'clock prayers, as the solitary plated candlestick was taken and our friend was on the point of ascending the stairs, the voice

of his hostess, in almost unaccustomed tones, was heard inquiring whether he would not have a little hot water. *She* meant to wash his hands in, of course; but he, to his eternal credit, answered, with a presence of mind and a tact which could belong only to a "deputation," "Thank you, if you please; and I should like *three lumps of sugar*." I believe they always gave him hot grog after that.

I confess that this tale is *àpropos* only to one half of the subject; it deals with hospitality, but it does not touch the ostentation with which it is sometimes offered; nevertheless perhaps it was worth telling. There is another, however, which occurs to me at this moment, strangely enough, —for I have no connection whatever with any of these societies,—pertaining also to a "deputation." A gong was sounded here, not indeed for dinner, but the gong of hospitality and assertion on the part of the host, and of much pretention on that of the guest.

The vicar of the parish in which I then lived told me one day that a very famous "deputation" was coming late that evening, who was most strict in his proprieties, and who had entirely left the world with its blandishments and its frivolities. "Does he smoke?" said I, rather wickedly, for these good fathers, like many other reasonable men, do smoke sometimes. "*Smoke!*" ejaculated the vicar; and he did not condescend to any further reply. Well, nine o'clock came, and with it the "deputation." A remarkably handsome silver coffee-pot, with other things to match, had been prepared; and this good man, the "deputation," holding his hands over the tea-tray, said to himself one of the longest private graces I ever,—not listened to, but beheld. It occurred to me that I was perhaps a little out of place, that the talk, though excellent, might be above me, and I therefore shortly took my leave. But I met the vicar the next morning, who, the smile creeping over his face in spite of himself, told me that his guest at bed-time had appeared so fidgety and uncomfortable that he was compelled to ask if he could be of any service. Why, yes. Might he smoke one pipe in the kitchen, or up his bed-room chimney? I think the vicar tried to look grave when he told me this, but we both burst out laughing in the end. The gong had been sounded so fearfully; it had summoned to a hospitality of so one-sided a nature, so strict, so proper, so demure; it had announced its coffee-pot and its grace before meat with such a flourish; it had chilled me with the anticipation of an exaggerated propriety; and it ended, yes, it ended in the total inability to go to bed without tobacco, and in the unique picture of an apostle smoking a new "clay" up the kitchen chimney.

The literal or the figurative gong of hospitality is an instrument which ought to be sounded with caution. It is a pity to make too much noise in one's hall, and a still greater pity to "profess too much," even if, like the lady in *Hamlet*, we keep our word. But gong or no gong, there are certain conditions taken for granted by the guest, which it is hardly honest in the host not to fulfil. For instance, the latter is tacitly pledged,

I think, not to let the nursery overflow its banks too frequently, and inundate the paths of daily life: he has no right to force an argument on his guest, and to keep the thunder of controversy on some detested subject constantly rumbling over his head. Of active duties there can be no doubt, and one would only waste words in reciting them. It is equally clear that the guest comes in with a certain sound of a trumpet which must not be as one of the hypocrites. He is not to command but to obey,—to accept hours, customs, and arrangements: he may suggest, indeed, but not plan; and he must remember, by all he holds most dear, not—by thought, word, or deed—to treat the house as if it were an inn.

Of obvious matter connected with hospitality, it is perhaps only left to remark, that that man who is constantly giving general invitations, and as often failing afterwards to name week or day, is of all men the greatest humbug. It is true that he may be, and indeed often is, simply a weak person, not only anxious to conciliate or give pleasure for the moment, but really for that moment meaning what he says. He goes away, perhaps not wholly forgetting, but procrastinating; and so, from indolence of mind, and habit, the affair drops at last out of his intention altogether. The fact is that,—without his being conscious of the circumstance,—it would be a greater bore to renew the invitation, and to consider when it would be convenient to receive the guest, than to lose something, in a particular instance, of his character for sociability and hospitality; on the other hand, the man may of course be a deliberate liar, offering what he has not the smallest intention of giving, as is the case also in other matters in life.

Leaving the literal gong, one may ask a question of some difficulty perhaps, viz., how far may a man of merit or fortune, of courage, learning, or wealth, assert the *truth* in any of these matters with regard to himself? That is (taking what has as yet been the reality in this paper now as a figure), how loudly may a man sound his gong, if he has on the table an excellent dinner indeed? As a proper modesty must of course be assumed in any pattern character, the question here is simply, —where, in such a case, would modesty end and vanity begin? There are not wanting people who would tell us that, under no circumstances, should a man, however meritorious, speak of his own merit. Others will allow that there are objects and occasions which justify, or even demand, his doing so. And some few, perhaps, assert that, if he will not exceed the truth, he may be his own trumpeter with just as much propriety as he may be the trumpeter of anybody else.

Perhaps if we look curiously into the lives of great men,—and such a contemplation, we are told, should "make our lives sublime,"—we shall find that a very fair number acted upon the third opinion, and asserted themselves roundly. Without affecting to call many witnesses, one may say at once, that Alexander the Great, Cæsar, Napoleon the Great, and Nelson, had very little reticence in this matter: the last of these, and perhaps of all the greatest hero, sometimes even calling for songs which

had been written to celebrate his own deeds. The epic poets had little opportunity of lauding themselves in their own works, though Milton tells us, in some controversial trifle, that he shall one day produce that which will be immortal; but of the others, many went to the full length. Byron vaunted while he deprecated himself. Horace was amongst the most conceited of mortals. The *Ode to Melpomene* is pretty clear on this point; and the—

> Exegi monumentum ære perennius,
> Regalique situ pyramidum altius,

is the prelude to a good deal of self-laudation. When Dr. Parr was asked who was the first Greek scholar, he said "Porson; but I need not tell you who is the second." Philosophers have not the credit of being a very modest race; but it is hardly worth while to make a parade of their opinions. But many great names could be quoted to show that genius, with its peculiar temptations, is not unfrequently retiring; and there are multitudes who have been content to leave their praises to others, or to name them only on a special requirement.

Perhaps, on the whole, *this* will be allowed, that as, in a perfect character, there must not only be no immodesty but no affectation, the fair, temperate, and unobtrusive assertion of one's own qualities is often legitimate, and may occasionally be necessary. Let us look for a moment, to the necessity, as, perhaps, the only point really worth considering.

It may sometimes be necessary for a man to assert himself up to a certain point, for his own proper advancement; for the world, often credulous enough when pinchbeck is exhibited, is, perhaps, sometimes sceptical about the character of true gold. But the truest necessity perhaps lies in the obligation under which every one lives to do the greatest possible good to those about him. To make our teaching of the smallest value, it is necessary that the world should recognize us as capable of giving instruction; and art and science at any rate are learned best from those who can show that they have a right to teach them.* Not that, as a *rule*, the world is slow to discover merit; the case of a good or great man being compelled to intrude his excellencies upon it, is possibly rare: all that is claimed here is, that it may sometimes be necessary.

No doubt, what is really delightful,—that which carries with it all the sympathies and all the praises of mankind,—is the modesty which would hide the merit, but which is drawn from its face by the impatient prayers

---

* Thus Mr. Ruskin, in his preface to the first edition of *Modern Painters*, writes—"It is proper for the public to know that the writer is no mere theorist, but has been devoted from his youth to the laborious study of practical art. Whatever has been generally affirmed of the old school of landscape painting is founded on familiar aquaintance with every important work of art from Antwerp to Naples."

of the world, as the veil of a bride is lifted, not by herself, but by those who would see her beauty.

I have no intention, however, of finishing this trifle in a strain of seriousness in which it scarcely commenced. It is my part here, perhaps, to describe, not so much the good itself which we all love, as its absurd opposite which we all ridicule. The affectation of possessing what we never had, and what the world knows we never had, is very instructive and very amusing. Young men who bared their throats and looked with agony into the ceiling during the first few years of Byron's fame, must have been very funny creatures. So must the young gentleman in Horace's time, who, on the authority of the *De Arte Poetica*, never had their hair or nails cut, because Democritus believed that all poets were mad; and long hair and long nails were considered signs of insanity. And yet many of those people did more than affect—they really believed. They sounded their gongs with the full conviction that those who answered them would not be disappointed. They had persuaded themselves that they were poets. Like Mr. Snodgrass, perhaps, it was never discovered that they had written anything; but that was hardly the point. Of the same sort was the Oxford or Cambridge undergraduate, who is said to have flourished some forty years ago. Coming up as a freshman, he brought with him a bottle of gooseberry-wine, home-made and carefully packed by the hands of an anxious mother, who advised him as to the use of it. This he produced to eleven other freshmen, and, locking the door behind him, declared that not a man should leave the room till the last drop was disposed of. He had just broken from the apron-strings, was smarting under the well-meant motherly advice, and wanted a carouse: to him that bottle, and the eleven men, constituted a carouse, most sincerely and honestly.

After all, either in sincerity or in sham, we have all our gongs. We call the world around us to witness either that we are orthodox or speculative, scrupulous or lax, rich, learned, young, brave, or fortunate. Most of us, I am sure, do it all with the sound of a trumpet, though the din perhaps falls most faintly on our own ears. We are proud of the flavour and the piquancy; and are so charitable withal, or possibly so ostentatious, that, even at the risk of making a noise, we call our friends and neighbours to the festival, that they may rejoice also!

The Barbarossa Legend.

In that special kind of German folk-lore, which is of a half mythical, half political character, Frederick the Redbeard plays the most prominent part. We come across him in local traditions, in popular poems, in national harangues, now and then even in parliamentary discourses, or in newspaper articles. Only quite recently he made his spectral apparition in a speech of Baron Weichs in the Austrian Reichsrath. Shortly before, it had been said in the Prussian House of Deputies, that the fall of German unity dated from the end of the Imperial Hohenstaufen race, to which Frederick Barbarossa belonged, and that German history, which had gone astray since then, ought to be resumed at that particular point.

The legend itself is, in its essence, well known all over the world. The great German king and emperor has never in reality died, but only withdrawn into the Kyffhäuser mountain; there he sits, in a crystal cave, at a marble table of snowy whiteness, surrounded by his knights—their horses being ready saddled. The whole company are asleep—in a trance—enchanted. Every hundred years the red-bearded prince awakes, and then asks a dwarf, who acts as a page, whether the ravens still fly around the mountain? If the dwarf comes back with the unwelcome message that they still do, Barbarossa and his men again fall asleep for another hundred years. At last, however, the ravens will cease to encircle the hill: he will come out of his magic abode, when he will restore the greatness, power, and welfare of Germany after a bloody battle, in which hosts of her foes will fall.

This story is in keeping with a much-prevailing notion about the whole House of Hohenstaufen. The epoch in which successive rulers of that name held sway in Germany, and over the "Roman Empire" at large, has been designated as the Political Romance of the Middle Ages, as the Epic of our Imperial annals. And, indeed, there has been no lack of dramatic development, of tragic grandeur, of lustre and terror, of stirring ontrasts between attempts at vast dominion and a precipitate fall, during the deeply-agitated time from Konrad III. to Konradin. Even as a glittering sword flashes forth from the darkness of night, so—in the words of Zimmermann—the Hohenstaufen race broke with startling brilliancy into our German history. Originally an insignificant family of "adalings,"* they, with giant steps, strode up to the summit of dazzling power. Their rule, from beginning to end, was an incessant glistening of the brandished glaive. And in the flash of the executioner's axe, on the block at Naples, their trace suddenly vanishes—the whole constituting a true tragedy, of soul-moving effect, which only has not yet found its proper poet.

"Heroes" the Hohenstaufen have been called. But heroes of the

* Noblemen.

rising spirit of their time they certainly were not, as the same Suabian historian observes. From the strong root of their power, from Germany, they tore themselves away, slaughtering German right and freedom at the altar of their Italian ambition, and attacking the free cities of Lombardy with a fierce cruelty that sickens the eye and the heart. Nor can it be said even in mitigation, that through their warlike despotism they, at least, upheld the unity of their own nation against the foes which internally undermined it. On the contrary, their unbridled ambition, which continually drove them to seek fields of glory abroad, had the effect of weakening the central authority at home in its dealings with those local governors, whose never-ending, and, at last, successful, rebellion finally led to the establishment of a medley of sovereign dynasties, in the place of a United Empire served by officials removable at will. The Hohenstaufen policy, in fact, was the cause of the later disruption of our national union. The Kaiser had to buy the military aid, which he so frequently required for his expeditions abroad, by concessions of sovereign privileges to his subordinate officials,—the dukes and princes. The very foundation of Austria as a distinct country, whose ruler should not be amenable any longer to the strict control of the German king and Kaiser, is traceable to such a mistaken act of Frederick Barbarossa. Most unjustly, therefore, is he considered the very representative of German unity.

Friends of art and poetry the Hohenstaufen were. They also had, each in his own way, great personal gifts. Bold warriors; some of them *minnesänger*, or troubadours; or inclined towards science and the intellectual enlightenment that flows from it, they yet, with scarcely an exception, were of a despotic temperament. One of the harshest was the famous Redbeard. He had the full *Junker* and tyrant vein. Without being remarkably pious, he yet delivered over that good reformer, Arnold of Brescia, to the Pope, who put him to the stake. The smell of the burnt human flesh was yet in the air when Barbarossa entered Rome, to be crowned emperor by the Pope, Hadrian IV. The towns, the peasantry, had no favour from that German imperator. His notions about his regal power were more than Cæsarean—they have a tinge of the Tartar. When the banner of freedom of the city of Milan was lowered before him, and the unhappy citizens were prostrated at his feet, with ropes round their necks, tears came into the eyes of all those present, at such humiliation of brave men. The Kaiser alone showed a face like a flint: "*sed solus imperator faciem suam firmavit, ut petram.*" He was an enemy of the people, this glorious, but at last doubly-defeated, Cæsar. It is true, towards the end of his prolonged and checkered rule, he made his peace with the Lombard League of Free Cities, and even expressed deep regret for what he had done. That was shortly before his decease. In Asia Minor, on a crusade, he met with his death (1190) in a manner not quite cleared up. Then the ever-busy Saga wove its veil over his memory, transfiguring him to such an extent as to make historical truth well-nigh vanish entirely from this new conception of his character.

Now, it may well be asked: how is it that this arbitrary, in many of his acts rather barbarous, often triumphant, but at last totally and deservedly humiliated warrior-king, who, during a long lifetime, had proved so bitter a foe to the popular classes in town and country, has, after all, been converted, by legend, into a very favourite, darling hero, and future national saviour, of the German nation?

For nearly forty years had the Redbeard stood at the head of our empire. His figure, therefore, necessarily made a deep impress on his epoch. Even in a bodily sense he was somewhat apt to captivate the people's imagination, if his court writers, who depict him to the very detail of his ears and teeth, have told the truth. They describe him as above the common height, of graceful build and noble deportment. They speak of the lustre of his reddish hair—(which, by-the-by, he wore short, not in waving locks, such as our painters erroneously attribute to him);—of the terrible glare of his blue eyes, comparable to the lightning of Heaven; of the dazzling whiteness of his skin, reminding one of the Alpine snow in the glow of the glaciers! It will be seen from this that the scribes laid it on thick; and Frederick was not the man to stop them in their ardour.

Yet, however strong the mark may have been which Barbarossa's image made on his contemporaries, and on the following generations, the question still remains,—How could such an enemy of the people, with all his heroics, be turned into a representative of popular aspirations? Why was he chosen to typify the Sleeping Deliverer?

Some may answer that the memory of Frederick I. had become purified, cleansed, as it were, by his later confession of repentance. Others may say that the world of aristocratic chivalry, combined with the influence of the priesthood to whom he had at last become reconciled, had done their best to give the convenient myth a popular currency. All that is, however, not a sufficient explanation. To arrive at a full understanding we must dig deeper. We must try to find the strong roots from which such fables sprout up and burst forth ever and anon, and show the process of transfiguration which they invariably go through, on having attained a certain stage.

First, then, the following facts and principles ought to be kept in mind:—The Redbeard myth is by no means so exact, rounded off, and clearly circumscribed, as one would suppose, for instance, from Rückert's poem. Its contents are *not* identified with a single individual hero. That Saga is rather a poetical transmutation of ancient Germanic religious creeds and attempts at an explanation of the phenomena of nature; and the strangest bits of oriental mythic lore have gradually become interwoven with it.

"We have then"—some will say—"a *quid pro quo* before us?"

To this I can only reply in the affirmative.

Yes, paradoxical as it may seem at the first glance,—the emperor who dreams in the mountain-cave, who has never died, and who is surrounded

by crystal splendour, is nothing else than the human transformation of the All-Father Wodan. The tale of the "Wild Hunter," and of the "*Wüthende Heer*," is equally to be traced back to Wodan; and, in a great measure, the vast and winding currents of that strange myth commingle with the not less fantastic course of the Redbeard legend. Not Barbarossa alone, but other Germanic heroes and leaders also, were "enmountained," if I may say so, by popular fiction. Nay, extraordinary, or even ridiculous, as it may sound, there is yet no doubt for the inquirer that Barbarossa in the Kyffhäuser, that the Rodensteiner who dwells in a hill of the Odenwald, that the Schnellert's Spirit, ay, that the Rat-catcher of Hameln, known to the general reader of German literature from Goethe's poem, and that the very bogies of the Christmas time—Knecht Ruprecht, Niklas, and Pelzmärtel—are, after all, the same figure, only in different costumes. If that can be proved, the Barbarossa myth certainly loses very much, though not everything, of its *political* significance. Through centuries, through thousands of years, the materials of Sagas remain essentially the same. The ever-weaving hand of fiction only seeks for new garnish, with which to edge, lace, and border out the familiar garment. Fresh colours are added, fresh adornment wrought into it; but its basis remains unchanged. Thus it preserves the charm of time-honoured remembrances, and still appears attractive to each succeeding generation.

When we look at the old Germanic tale-treasure and endeavour to reduce its contents to the simplest elements—even as we do with a language, when trying to get at its roots—one experiences a feeling as if seeing, in remote antiquity, lofty trees growing up from a few germs, trees which, like unto those of the virgin forest, lower their branches earthwards—striking root once more, so to say, from above: then rise again with firm stem, spreading their boughs—until at last an impenetrable thicket is created, an entangled, labyrinthine wood, in which tree interlaces and grows out from tree, and the very soil seems gnarled, knotted, and fibrous, whilst the thick roof of leaves shuts out every ray of light.

Thus it is with sagas and tales. From Asia a forest of popular legends has spread over Europe, which all curiously hold and interlace each other. Tales which at present have only a place in the nursery, or are yet narrated in a lonely village—by the side of the spinning-wheel, before the flickering fire, when nature seems entranced in a weird winter sleep,—were once a part of glorious hero-sagas, of ambitious religious systems, of heathen creation-stories, of ancient attempts at a philosophical or physical explanation of this wondrous world. That which a superficial half-culture formerly derided as mere boorish nonsense, can in this way be followed into Indian or Egyptian antiquity, and sometimes suddenly comes back upon us in the legends of the Red-skins on the other side of the ocean. But I have to furnish the proof of the Barbarossa legend being only a transformation of older tales and mythologies.

So far from his being alone spirited away into a mountain hollow, the same was fabled, before him, of Charlemagne, who is said to sit

enchanted in the Desenberg, near Warburg; or in a hill near the Weser; in the Spessart; in the Donnersberg; in the Untersberg, and elsewhere. He, too, was to break forth one day from his subterranean dwelling-place as a great leader of battle. The same tale was told of our Henry I. of Germany, who was said to be enmountained near Goslar, and of our Otto the Great, to whom the Kyffhäuser itself was ascribed as his spectral abode. Later, the legend substituted Friedrich the Hohenstaufen for those earlier German kings and emperors. Now the Redbeard was conjured away into the Kyffhäuser; another myth placed him in the Untersberg, one of the legendary haunts of the Franconian Karl the Great.

The doubts about the manner in which Frederick had found his death in the river Seleph—whether it was during a bath, or in riding through it; whether he was drowned, or died a few days after an injudicious plunge into the cooling water,—together with the fact of his having disappeared in the far East, where fables seem to grow wild—contributed certainly much to his name being chosen as a graft on the old mythic stem. The mystery that hung round his decease made him a fit subject for fiction.

Some particular traits of the Barbarossa legend are clearly derived from the East. There is an Asiatic tradition of the fourteenth century, which said that the dominion of the world would once fall to a Prince who could succeed in hanging up his buckler on a certain withered tree. The Tartars related that this tree stood in Tauris—in the Crimea. Other Oriental nations mentioned the Mamre Wood as the place. I may observe, in passing, that this myth has some vague affinity to the ancient Greek tale of the Golden Fleece, which hangs on a tree in a sacred wood, and the conquest of which was to bring glory, riches, and power of dominion.

Now, of Frederick I. of Germany it was fabled that if his beard had reached, in growing, the third corner of the table, an immense change would occur in the world. On the Walser field a great battle would be fought; there a withered tree would stand, on which the Redbeard was to hang up his buckler: thus the victory would be gained, and Germany's dominion would be founded.

Hence it is proved already that Frederick is neither the only mythic figure of this kind, nor the tale itself of exclusively German origin.

Another Barbarossa legend has it that the battle on the Walser field is to herald in the world's end—so to say, a *Götter-Dämmerung*. The bad are slain by the virtuous; Truth and Right obtain the mastery. The political meaning of the myth here disappears entirely. The great carnage which is to take place has a religious significance. The form of this particular saga has a Christian aspect; but its ancient heathen contents may be easily peeled out from it, even as in the *Nibelungen-Lied* the old Germanic heathens may, without difficulty, be recognized under similar garb.

Popular fiction has not stood still after Frederick in its transmuting procedures. About four centuries after him, Charles V., certainly not an emperor of very patriotic German character—he could not even properly converse in German; the Spaniards said he was defective also in Spanish!—

was similarly drawn into the poetic cauldron. Down to quite recent times the peasantry in Upper Hesse related of him that he had fought a great battle and been victorious; in the evening a rock opened, taking in Karl and his army, and then closing once more its walls. There the Emperor sleeps now in the mountain. Every seven years he issues forth with his men in ghostlike array: a storm is heard whizzing through the air, together with the neighing of horses and the clatter of hoofs; after the spirit procession is over, the Wild Chase returns to the mountain.

Now this Charles V., besides being very little of a true German, had given the peasantry small cause for liking him particularly. Under his government occurred that terrible overthrow of the so-called "Peasants' War," which ended with the application of the most frightful punishments and tortures to the defeated insurgents. They were strung up like so many braces of birds, or quartered, or put to death with red-hot irons, the flesh being taken from them piecemeal; or their bodies were ripped up, and their bowels taken out, whilst the whip was applied to the lacerated and howling forms of suffering humanity. And yet the legend of the peasantry transfigured even the Emperor under whom all this happened into a demi-god, throning in a magic cavern!

The fact is, this legend about Charles V., which seems to have arisen as a superstructure on the Barbarossa myth, has a common root with the latter, namely, the myth about the Wild Hunter and the *Wüthende Heer*, which, in its turn, springs from the Wodanic circle of sagas.

Wodan, Wuotan, or Odin, was mainly considered as Lord of the Air, who chases through the sky in the roaring storm. Perhaps his name signified "the Quick-going;" hence the storming, the raging, which would the better account for the transmutation of Wodan's or Wuotan's hosts into a *Wüthende Heer*. But into this etymological question I will not enter, knowing too well the irreconcilable nature of the different derivations, and the impossibility of arriving at any satisfactory solution. On surer ground we tread—if the quaking soil of mythology can at all be regarded as sure—when remembering how similar the ghostlike procession of various popular heroes is to that of the heathen All-Father.

The myth represents him as careering along on a milk-white horse, from whose nostrils fire issues. A broad hat covers the grey head of the ancient god; a wide flowing mantle flutters about his shoulders. The horse is considered a symbol of the drifting cloud. The wide mantle equally typifies the cloud-specked sky; the hat, even, is thought to be a representation of the cloudy cover of the earth. As a symbol of the starry sky, Wuotan, or Muot, as he is sometimes called, with a not unfrequent change of the initial consonant, is also sometimes regarded. Witness the riddle of the Swiss peasantry in the Aargau:—

Der Muot,
Mit dem Breithut,
Hat mehr Gäste
Als der Wald Tannenäste.

To this Lord of the Sky, of the Clouds, and the Winds, the myth attributed the additional character of a Chieftain and Marshal of the Dead, who leads the souls of the departed through the air to the splendid palace, the Walhalla. The Romans compared our Wodan to their own Mercury. Evidently the point of comparison was this, that both held the office of guides to the other world; hence Mercury was called "Psychopompos."

However, it may be asked, what has all this to do with Barbarossa? The close connection will presently be seen.

That god of the winds who careers through the air, leading on horseback the army of the dead, was represented, when not engaged in such stormy procession, as sleeping, dreaming; sleeping in a glistening cloud-castle, or mountain of clouds, in a *Wolkenburg*, or *Wolkenberg* ("Burg" and "Berg" are traceable to the same root). It means the storm that sleeps in the cloud-castle, or, in more sensual form, the Storm-God, the ancient, hoary-headed. And as this storm-god is a leader of the dead whose souls depart through the air, we have here at once the whole necessary scaffolding for the construction of a legend about a great army leader, or warrior king, or, if need be, also a wild hunter, who sleeps and dreams in a mountain, where he waits his time, or from which he occasionally breaks forth. The *Wüthende Heer* of the *wilde Jäger* is Wuotan's army. For awhile the two myths go side by side, each with a touch of the other. Then they separate entirely, that is to say, when, in the memory of the masses, among whom those myths hold sway, all recollection of the root and origin of the words in question has disappeared.

How often, through the misconception of words, has a new mythology, a new superstition, arisen! First, a word was misunderstood; then it was filled out with the corresponding contents which it seemed to indicate. Thus, in some parts of Germany, the *wilde Jäger* became a *Weltjäger*, a world-hunter; and, curiously enough, this latter expression, which has simply been begot by an error of the ear, comes nearer once more to the original idea of the stormy wind, or the storm-god, who pervades, as Wodan, the world. In this manner the false idea comes out of the originally correct word, and the more correct idea grows up from a misconceived designation. Clearly, mankind has some difficulty in getting at truth with such inherent failings of language.

The two great branchings-off of the Wodanic idea are, consequently, the Wild Hunter who dwells in the mountain, and who leads the hosts of the departed; and the different Warrior Kings who sleep in a mountain with their dead yet never-dying hosts.

Each of these separate outgrowths of the Wodanic Saga circle have been worked in the most variegated manner by local fiction. In Brunswick the grave is shown of a Junker Hackelberg, who is there regarded as the wild hunter. In the Uckermark there is a tradition of a wretched huntsman, Barens, who once went a-chasing on a Sunday, and who is now condemned, with his hounds, to be on the chase for all eternity—at least, whenever the wind howls at night. Would it be believed that

this Junker Hackelberg and this wretched Barens are, even in name, old Wodan? "Hakol-bërand" was once one of the names of Wodan. It means the mantle-wearer,* the wearer of the cloud-mantle. Wodan *Hakol-bërand* became *Hackelberg;* and lastly, throwing off his mantle altogether, he became simple *Bärens.* A whole crowd of figures of the spirit and fairy land, male and female, have in a similar manner been evolved out of some misunderstanding of the numerous surnames and attributes of our ancient German gods and goddesses. To treat of this would, however, lead too far; and I will only remark in passing that Goethe's *wohlbekannter Sänger, der viel-gereiste Rattenfänger,* who "occasionally also catches girls," has arisen from a strange combination of two qualities attributed to Wodan. The rats or mice which he catches are originally nothing but the symbols of the souls whom the All-Father carries to their final destination; the souls, in ancient popular superstition, being often represented as mice. Thus, a little red mouse issues from the mouth of the beauty with whom Faust dances on the Blocksberg. The "girl-catching" of the *Rattenfänger* is reducible to the tradition of Wodan hunting and catching the moss-women, wood-nymphs, and *Loh-jungfern* —that is to say, the storm-god, or the storm, seizes the boughs and the leaves of the forest-tree, shaking and catching them in his embrace. The Hackelberg and the Barens at last lose, in some parts of Germany, even the faint trace of some resemblance in name to the old heathen god. In Schleswig-Holstein the wild hunter finally came to be a certain Frederick Blohm, the gamekeeper of a bishop; or a certain Herr von Schlippenbach; or, in other provinces, a General Sparr, and so forth. In this manner Wodan had at last donned a livery or a uniform! The manifold popular tales about aristocratic robber-knights also aided in the process of transfiguration. The oddest and most insignificant personages were engrafted on the mythic trunk.

But it is time to pass over to the other branch-line of the Wodanic Saga circle, where we are to meet our Barbarossa. The Junker Hackelberg—and this will explain why I have gone into some details on matters apparently unconnected with the Redbeard legend—may serve here as a transition. He forms, so to speak, with the hero of the Kyffhäuser, an ill-matched Siamese twin.

When Junker Hackelberg and the other wild hunters are roving about at night, a raven flies before them. The nocturnal phantom passage of Wodan was equally preceded by the mortuary birds, the ravens. They were the black-feathered harbingers of the souls destined to Walhalla. Besides the ravens and the horses of the Wodanic procession, we also find boars connected with the stormy march of his Hosts of Departed. And here it may be observed that, in the mythic lore of our forefathers, the wind, which scrapes and roots up the soil and raises clouds of dust,

* From "hakol," Latin *cucullus,* cowl,—*Guggel,* the German *hehlen, Hülle,*—and "beran," to bear.

was represented as a boar, from the well-known scraping propensities of that tusked quadruped. Even now-a-days the peasantry in some Bavarian districts speak of the "Wind-Sow" which tramples and roars through the country. The expression is certainly less poetical than that which prevails in some other parts,—namely, *die Windin*, the Lady of the Air, a playful goddess of the storm, whose delight it is to snatch the hats from men's heads, so that they should run after her.

I have spoken of Wodan's ravens, horses, and boars. They are all to be found in the Barbarossa legend. Thus, that warrior-king is again the wraith of the Germanic god that has been spirited away into an underground world. From the dazzling palace, up there in the milk-white cloud-castle, he has, by an inverted *Fata Morgana*, been charmed into a glittering crystal palace of a subterranean cave, where he sits, not on a white horse, but on a white ivory chair, at a white marble table; his whole suite of heroes and representative animals having remained with him. Only, the ravens which formerly preceded Wodan, or sat on his shoulders, now flap their wings round the mountain. But whoever, by chance, strays into the Kyffhauser, as it happened now and then to some peasant, will see there the horses tied to their stabling-places, and boars also will he meet with, running in and out. Now and then, a strange clangour and clatter, as of chains, is heard. It is the storm that is awakening—it is Barbarossa that wants to ride forth into the surrounding land.

We have to take into account here, also, another component part in the formation of myths. Christianity, it is known, had some difficulty in getting a hold on some of the German tribes. They killed the messengers of the new faith who had struck down their sacred trees. The Saxons battled for long years against Charlemagne, as much from love of independence and self-government as from attachment to their own creed, which pleased their warlike and defiant character better than did the meek doctrine of the Saviour who wore the crown of thorns. Now, many among the people, in spite of outward conversion, remained secret adherents of the old *Asen-Saga*. The rites of the Blocksberg, the many trials of persons reputed to be witches dealing with demons, prove the fact in their own way. It has been said that the Reformation could strike root more quickly in the North, because Catholic Christianity had scarcely yet been firmly implanted there. This is certainly true, to some extent; however, I believe that even in the South the heathen ideas and customs, though disfigured in their meaning, and no longer understood, have scarcely died out earlier than they did in the North. It is a chapter on which much indeed might be said. Even now, the reapers in some Bavarian districts are accustomed to bind together the stalks that have remained untouched by the sickles, forming a figure of it, with a head and arms rudely fashioned out of a sheaf, which they call the "Oanswald," "Aswald," or "Oswald," and before which they kneel down, offering thanks and prayers, and exclaiming: "This is for the Aswald!" Here we have an ancient

form of worship in honour of the "Asenwalter," or ruler of the gods, the all-creative force—which afterwards was changed into a "St. Oswald."

The priests, themselves, favoured such transformations. In order to wean the people from its heathen creed, they did not deny the existence of the pagan divinities, but only degraded them, turning them into devils, and making the converts abjure them as if those "devils" had real existence. We have yet such an ancient formula of abjuration, dating from the eighth century, and referring to Thunar, Wodan, Saxnote, "and all the other fiends that are their associates." Sometimes, the dethroned gods and goddesses were changed into dead-alive cave-dwellers of the heroic mould, or into ghastly forms of the lower regions, into nocturnal lemures and gnomes. The people, still faithful to the old superstition, and bearing in their hearts the ancient god, though not daring to exhibit him in the light of day, hid him by preference in a mountain—embalmed him, if I may say so—put him to sleep—made him dream, and only called him out, in their imagination, at night, or at great distances of time, when he came, as it were, on an occasional visit.

Von Zeit zu Zeit seh' ich den Alten gern,
Und hüte mich, mit ihm zu brechen!

After a while, all recollection of the original significance of the myth vanished, and as this occurred in an age when there were few books, and the art of printing was still unknown, Fancy, which is always apt to run wild among the half-cultivated, then felt perfectly free, and easily broke out into the most disordered inventions. In the long evenings, at the fir-wood fire, when light and shadow play hide-and-seek, the most incredible substitutions and transformations were begotten by an unbridled imagination. Thus Charlemagne—that enemy of the Wodan creed—himself became the substitute of Wodan, and *he* was concealed in the underground palace! Again, later, his place was taken by Frederick of Hohenstaufen; the enemy of the people becoming its apparent favourite. In this way, the most opposite notions and tendencies, heathen and Christian, European and Asiatic, religious and political, are combined in inextricable confusion. The forces of nature, gods, heroes, devils, hags, gnomes, and animals, are all thrown together in a confused heap, forming a precious broth of witchcraft.

I have mentioned Karl the Great as the predecessor of Barbarossa in that particular form of myth which removes a hero from the eyesight of men, giving him a spectral, and yet, at the same time, terrestrial abode. I might allude to a similar myth referring to Dietrich von Bern, that is, Theodorich, the King of the Goths, of Verona, in which all the constituent elements of the legend, with the usual sorcerer's apparatus, are already contained, viz. the mountain, the horses, the dogs, the ravens, the sleep and the dream of the spell-bound hero, as well as the rustling and clatter in the air when he starts for his roving hobgoblin expedition. It is always the same tale, only new raiments are ceaselessly woven for it at the ever-whirring loom of time.

Thus mythology, the heroic legend, and all folk-lore and fairy-tale matter is engaged in a continuous up-and-down process of development and degeneracy. First, we see the feeble attempts of a people in remote antiquity, trying to account for the world and its working forces. Then, partly by the artistic instinct, partly by a misconception of words, partly by the rise of a priestly caste, which endeavours to use the crude ideas of the mass as a means of power and influence for itself, a series of idols and gods are shaped, which either are supposed to walk on the green earth, to haunt its mountains, fields, and rivers, or which are made to throne in the welkin. With these celestial figures the heroes of this world, raised to the position of demi-gods, are gradually confused, if the gods have not been altogether fashioned out of worshipped human leaders. Later, when the original belief suffers in its influence by the invasion of a new mythic creed, an evolution in an inverse rate takes place. Then fiction no longer spreads upwards, but it descends from the serene and lofty heights to the earth, and even into the regions beneath it. The gods once more become simple heroes, men, nay, even cobolds and spectres. The once powerful figure of a Wodan shrinks into an uncommon, or even a common, emperor or king. It suffers diminution to the extent of being changed into a wild hunter, or a gamekeeper on a lordly demesne; or it turns up, after much variegated masquerading, as a Pelznickel among the peasant children, whom it terrifies or rewards before Christmas-time, according to their behaviour. Thus, Freia-Holda, the noble goddess of love, the German Venus, becomes simple Frau Holle, a beautiful witch, or even a spuke, and a hag, charming in the face, but similar to a hollow tree from behind. And songs, which once may have formed part of religious rites, are at last only yet found in a fragmentary form, apparently of sense devoid, or only with an occasional glimpse of meaning —such as the "Song of the Stork," or the "Song of the Kindleins-Brunnen," which children repeat with lisping voices, having heard them when on the mother's or the nurse's knee.

Thus, that which once was revered as heavenly, returns to the earth, is transplanted into field and dale, into caves, nay, even into the kitchen; and a splendid fable of gods ends as an Ashpitel, a Cinderella, who drearily sits at the hearth, shelling peas, despised and ill-used by her sisters, the new religions, until one day the inquirer comes, who, from the delicate slipper, recognizes the sublime beauty, and who raises the soiled tale once more from dust and dirt to its high poetical rank, to its philosophical significance.

In this way we have to comprehend also the Redbeard legend. In doing so, we shall be able to enjoy its poetical contents, without allowing ourselves to be misled in the appreciation of an historical character, and without becoming untrue to those principles of humanity and freedom against which the famous Hohenstaufen Prince was one of the worst offenders.

KARL BLIND.

Two Ladies—Two Hours.

"Girl, get you in!" She went, and in one month
They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,
To lands in Kent, and messuages in York,
And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile
And educated whisker.

I.

What restless genius is it that takes so malicious a pleasure in shifting and mingling the various materials of which daily life is composed? No sooner are a set of people and circumstances comfortably sorted out together, than they are suddenly engulphed, dispersed, revolved away,—no sooner are they well dispersed than all the winds, and horses, and laws of gravitation are struggling to bring them together again. Take, for instance, a colony of people living next door to each other and happily established. How long are they left in peace? One dear member crosses the sea—another soon follows, and the remainder cannot fill up the gap. Or let us even take a company of five or six persons comfortably talking round a fire. How long will their talk last on? An hour rarely—half-an-hour, perhaps—even ten minutes is something saved out of the rush of circumstance; and then a clock begins to strike any number from one to twelve; an organ to grind distractingly; a carriage to roll slowly, crushing the gravel outside. Visions flit in of expectant wives and husbands, of impatient coachmen, of other semi-circles—enter Mrs. Grundy,—five o'clock tea, the fire begins to smoke, or what not, and the comfortable little circles jar, break up, disperse in all directions. And, indeed, if a certain number of people are happily established together, the whole combination of accidental circumstances is against them, and nothing can happen that will not interfere more or less with their harmony.

Years ago a little set of people had been sitting round the fire at Brand House, and had dispersed east and west, and for a dozen years, and on the day about which I am writing, some of them had come together again by an odd accident. It is true they were sitting in stiffer attitudes than when they had last assembled, and some of them seemed to have wigs and masks on, compared to their old remembrance of each other. A little girl who was playing in her pinafore last time, is now dressed up as a real young lady, with a red petticoat, and looped grey dress, and round grey eyes, and a chignon; a young fox-hunting person is disguised as an archdeacon; the hostess, who was a handsome

and dignified person twelve years ago, has put on a black front and spectacles, which certainly do not improve her appearance; the least changed of the party is a young man, who had just come of age when they last met all together. He has grown a thick beard, he has travelled, and learnt to smoke a narghilé since his last visit to Brand House; but, on the whole, he is not greatly altered.

They have been sitting for an hour, and reading and talking of one thing and another, while a log of wood has changed into blue and golden flames. Mrs. Brandiscombe, in the wig and spectacles, announces an arrival by the six-o'clock train. Her son-in-law, the Archdeacon, and his lady, who are returning home next day, talk about stations and cross-roads and convenient trains. The young traveller, it seems, is leaving too, and going to another country-house, called The Mount, about a mile off. The young lady is pressed to stay. "Dear Caroline" (the expected guest) "would be so disappointed to miss her." The girl hesitates, blushes up, says she thinks she must go home with her uncle the Archdeacon; she shall see her friend at dinner; she cannot stay here; she cannot accept the Merediths' invitation to The Mount; she is wanted at home. They all try to persuade her to change her mind; and just as she is giving way the carriage is announced. Mrs. Brandiscombe instantly rises to get ready, and they all disperse; some go to their rooms, some out into the cold dim December world all round about; their voices die away up the staircase and passages, and everything is silent.

Janet Ireton, the young lady in the chignon, is delayed in the hall for a minute by Mr. Hollis of the beard, who asks her if she is going to walk with her uncle. Janet answers shyly and quickly, and springs upstairs lightfooted. She comes upon the two elder ladies leisurely proceeding down the passage.

"He is most to blame, if *those* are his real intentions," says Mrs. Brandiscombe. "He should not cause a young girl to be remarked upon; it is not the first time."

"It is his way, mamma," says Mrs. Debenham, the Archdeacon's second wife. "The Archdeacon won't believe me. What does it matter? he is very nice. I assure you, he means nothing. Don't you remember how he flirted with me and with —— Oh, Janet, I didn't hear you."

"Hm—ah!—girls cannot be too careful," says Mrs. Brandiscombe, turning into her room, while Janet, with tingling ears and cheeks, flies down a side passage. The coachman, to his indignation, is actually kept waiting ten minutes.

Janet, who is in her great room at the end of the passage, fastening a black hat, with a smart red feather, becomingly on the top of her chignon, is surprised by a tap at the door, and an apparition of Mrs. Brandiscombe herself, ready veiled, and gloved, and caped, and prepared for her daily airing in the close carriage.

"Although it is against my custom to keep the horses waiting," says

the old lady, "it has occurred to me that, as I am going to call upon Mrs. Meredith, you might like to send some message. Are you quite determined to return home to-morrow?"

"Almost quite," Janet said, wistfully, looking into the old lady's wrinkled face. "I have had a delightful holiday. Everybody has been so kind—I don't——"

"I merely wished to ascertain your intentions," said the shrouded figure, preparing to go. "We are only too glad to keep you, Janet; although I cannot but agree with my daughter in her opinion of our guest. He has, if I don't mistake, a very special reason for wishing to prolong his stay in this neighbourhood—a lady whom he knew. . . But I am not at liberty—I merely wish to express a hope that your name may not be coupled with his, and to approve of your self-respect and prudent consideration for other people's opinion."

Mrs. Brandiscombe had been uttering dark oracles ever since Janet's arrival, but none so definite as this. The girl listened, half angry, half incredulous, half indignant. Then she ran downstairs in no very amiable frame of mind. Mr. Hollis was gone. Her uncle was waiting for her in the hall, rolling an umbrella, and prepared to start. Janet walked away still disturbed in her mind.

"What has become of Mr. Hollis?" said the Archdeacon, looking up and down the misty garden. "He promised to wait for us here."

"Who wants Mr. Hollis?" said Janet. "Come along, uncle John; we shall lose the best part of the day."

II.

Who does not know the look of furniture in a room lately vacated, as it stands about the chimney-piece in confidential proximity? A sort of faint image of the people who are gone is still in the deserted chamber. Stuffed arm-chairs with sprawling castored legs turned towards each other, a *duchesse* with a grand lace back in an affected attitude by the table, a sprinkling of light bachelor cane-chairs joining into the conversation, and then the hostess's state chair in its chintz dressing-gown by the chimney corner, with its work-basket, its paper-cutter, and its book by its side. The book at Brand House is *Early Years of the Prince Consort*. There is a lozenge and a coat of arms upon the paper-cutter. One of the castored chairs has been reading the *Guardian*, which is now lying in a dead faint upon the floor all doubled over. On the grand lace-covered cushion rests a little green book of poetry, with a sprig of holly to mark the place. Everything is quite silent, and a coal falls into the fender, which conscientiously reflects the fire. There is a distant roll (not so loud as that which announces the arrival of the carriage on the stage), then more silence; some one walking in the garden looks in through the tall window. You may see through the glass that it is the gentleman with

the black beard and black eyes and country leggings who was lately established by the lace chair.

He walks away and disappears behind a laurel-bush, and then nothing more happens till the clock begins to strike. With the last stroke of four comes a sound of voices, a rustling of silks. The door opens wide, and a lady is standing in the middle of the room, looking curiously up and down with bright slow glances. Her glances are those of a well-esteemed and well-satisfied person. People look what they *are*, gazing at other lives; they look what they *feel* when they are sitting being gazed at. It is curious to note the different expressions with which people see the daily life-pictures that pass before them, the long portrait-galleries, the pictures of still life for housekeepers, the *tableaux de genre* in our homes. Some look critically, secure of their own standing, though it may be on a different level; others, wistfully, feeling that they have no share, and are always looking on; others—and to this class my lady belongs—with a half-sympathy and a half-indifference. She does not care to feel a whole sympathy, her life has been too complete and calm for that; and yet its very completeness and calmness, which have left no room for some things she may once have dreamt of, prevent her from feeling the whole indifference of very happy people; and now and then she gives a glance from her sheltered bower at the sun and the winds in which others are struggling in the plains without.

Slow as these glances are, they have noted everything: the chairs, the tall windows, across one of which gusty branches are brushing; she sees the distant corners of the room reflected in the dim looking-glasses; she looks back to know if the butler has followed her, and then moves, with a smile, towards the farthest window, passing, reflected on from one grim looking-glass to another (sometimes sideways, sometimes crossing some distant room in a contrary direction to that in which she is really moving), and at last she stops in the shadowy darkness and light of the farthest window. She can see the grey garden through its panes, the black trees and blue dull lawn, the boughs all swaying, the mists hanging from the creaking branches or heaped up at the end of the long alleys; only towards the sea the heavy clouds are rent, and a pale grey gleam lights up the silver and steel of the waters beyond the oak-tree glade. Mist and sea and land without, the familiar streaks and shadows and reflections within. It is a dozen years since she last saw it all; more than that.

My lady, whose name is Caroline, is about thirty years old, a soft happy-looking woman, with brown bright hair, with dimpled cheeks and pretty white hands, on which flash and twinkle a great many diamond rings as she unhooks the clasp of her red gipsy cloak. It slides along her black silk folds and falls in a comfortable purple red heap all round about her feet. So she stands, taking in every indication of what now is, and of what is left since the last time when she stood in this very corner: the same woman, looking out at the same sea and sky and rustling trees, so

unchanged did it all seem to her, so unchanged did she feel. For in two minutes the circles have turned inversely: she has travelled back, beginning at the nearest end of her life: her return, her wanderings, her widowhood, her children, her marriage, her early troubles all whirl past. People are not only their present selves but all their old selves at the same time—sometimes one and sometimes another comes uppermost; and Caroline Rowland is one particular self of a dozen years ago at this minute, an old sad childish self with an odd prescience of the future. Other spirits are there too, dressed in their old-fashioned dresses. Some are alive, some are dead people. The spirit of poor Mr. Brandiscombe is evoked; she can see him in his big chair as he sits nodding off to sleep. Mrs. Brandiscombe has cast away her front, Fanny (she is married to the Archdeacon now: she married a year after her cousin) is sitting at the piano singing "Theckla's Sorrows," set to music. How she used to sing, rolling her little fat body from side to side, and winking her little pig's eyes! . . . . With all this rush of old emotion more visions come, bringing a faint blush into the widow's cheek. One of them is the remembrance of a young man. It comes striding straight across the room saying good-by in a quick impatient voice.

She remembers looking up in a bewildered incredulous way, and turning and almost blinded by what she saw—she could not meet his parting looks, they seemed to kill her as she stood beneath them; she could not speak nor cry before them all. She remembered holding on tight by the marble table: all the rest of the room was swinging before her meanwhile in tune to Fanny Brandiscombe's screams. "Why do people remember such things?" says poor Caroline, protesting.

Fanny Brandiscombe would have been flattered if she could have known how many years that song would go on ringing in her cousin's ears. Sometimes people quite unconsciously do something, say something, that is to last another person's lifetime. Sometimes it is, alas! their own lifetime that they put into a passing moment—a minute that never ceases for them. It goes on through life, and beyond life, perhaps, to that other life where how many of us, if the choice were ours, would not gladly carry the sorrows and remembrances of this one? It was a minute like this that Caroline was remembering. To-day, loved and trusted and independent of others, and well considered by the world, and on good terms with herself, she felt as if she could almost envy her girlish humility and innocent helplessness. Now, her standard might be a little wider perhaps, but it was not so high; now she might be happier, perhaps, but not so happy—sorrier, but never so sorry.

The things that she had hoped for of late seemed sordid and small compared to the old dreams of her youth. Men and women are not stocks and stones looking on unaltered at events as they go by; one's life must affect one in the end. One of the many voices that are in the silence says to Mrs. Rowland: "Yours is an easy life now; your old one was hard and sad and unselfish; the old one was best—the old one was the best."

"What is the use of thinking about it?" says Mrs. Rowland, impatient even from the heights of her serene indifference, and she moves back impatiently to the fire again, glad to escape into to-day once more. "How cold it is. I suppose aunt Brandiscombe still locks up the coal? No one should leave anything unlocked, not even a coal-cellar. It *was* a shame, wasn't it?" (the widow is appealing to her own face in the glass: it looks so sympathizing that she bursts out laughing). "How I cried that night going to bed in the moonlight, and Fanny Brandiscombe cried too. I wonder why she cried? I think if any young man ever empties the cream-jug into my little Kitty's tea, as George Hollis did into mine, I should expect him to come forward, and not to go away for ever without a word. I was civil enough when we met at Florence, and John asked him to dinner."

I think it was to escape from spells of her own fancy, and to feel herself safe in commonplace again, that this modern Melusina rang the bell violently, pulling at a great limp worsted-work arm with a huge brazen hand.

"Will you bring me some tea, if you please?" says Mrs. Rowland to a butler, who appeared in answer to the pull, and whose calm clerical appearance dispersed the ghosts that had been disporting themselves.

The butler looks puzzled.

"Mrs. Brandiscombe will be in to tea at five o'clock," he says, doubtfully. "She has given orders to get everything ready for five, but, of course——"

"Oh, very well," says Mrs. Rowland, "I'll wait. Is there anybody staying in the house?"

"The Archdeacon and Mrs. Debenham are staying till to-morrow, and Miss Ireton remains, I believe," says the butler. "Mr. Hollis is just gone—his luggage is to follow him to the Mount—Mr. Franks left yesterday."

"It is very cold," says Mrs. Rowland, with a little start and shiver; "could you put a log on the fire, and—and bring me a paper, if you please?"

"To-day's papers are only just come," says the butler, respectfully; "and Mrs. Brandiscombe always likes to open them herself."

Any other time Caroline Rowland would have laughed outright at the old well-remembered cranks, that had lasted out so many better things; but to-day all this thinking and remembering have sobered her usual bright spirits; a sort of uneasy doubt has taken hold of her; a sort of self-reproach that had been waiting for her for years; lurking patiently in wait in that dim corner yonder, while other feelings and events came and passed, and time and place shifted, and sorrows changed, and melted into peace. What had she done? Could she forgive herself now? Not quite. Going back into that old corner, it had seemed to her as if her old conscience had laid hands on her—At last I hold you—at last! Why did you try to escape from me? What have you been about? Why had

you so little patience? Why did you flirt with poor John when you loved George Hollis? was that why he was angry? A thought of what might have been—of a union of true hearts, a vision so far different from what its reality had been—seemed to pass before her. "Forgive me, dear John," she was saying in her heart all the time. And perhaps she loved her husband most at this very instant, when she told herself how little she had loved him. Caroline was a woman who, if need be, could put her conscience into another person's keeping; and in John's lifetime he had been purse-bearer and conscience-keeper for them both; and she had but to look nice, and keep within her allowance, and attend to her children, and nurse him when he had the gout, and never think of the past—that, you know, would have been wrong for a married woman; but for a widow—for a widow it was very silly.

It was odd and unexpected and uncomfortable altogether, and that odd chance mention of a name had chilled her; and if she had known she was going to feel like this, nothing would have induced her to come; but soon the widow calmed down, and the fire burnt warm, and she pulled her knitting from her pocket, and in putting the little loops together on the needles she found distraction. In *Villette* the impetuous Emanuel desires Lucy Snow to drop every stitch of work that is not intended specially for him. Many people would have to go bare-shod if all the stitches were dropped that are not theirs by right. If the moments of distraction, of despondency, that are knitted into even rows were to be taken away from the wearers of the silken chains, and purses, and woollen socks—the hopeless regrets knitted away in dumb records of grey, and red, and white wool—little Tom Rowland, for one, would have his toes through. But by degrees, as she worked on, his mother grew more quiet and more calm; her flushed face softened to its usual placid sweetness; the lights of the fire were shining on her hair; the comfortable warmth soothed and tranquillized her; and she sat at last, working much as usual, the very personification of rippling silken prosperity, installed by the fire in Mrs. Brandiscombe's own chair, the deep folds of shining black, warm in the red firelight, the needles gleaming as they criscrossed each other on their journey.

III.

Meanwhile a grey December day is mistily spreading over the great bare plain in front of the house, across which Mrs. Brandiscombe's fat horses trot daily. It is all sandy and furze-grown, with pools gleaming black and white, and dull green prickly things growing. The roads travelling across the plain go floundering from white sand into yellow mud. Here and there in the mist some stunted slate-tiled house is standing. It may be warm within and dry and light; from without those lonely tenements look like little coffins lying unburied. The clouds are hanging over the plain; towards the sea they seem to break, and some of their misty veils are parting and swinging on a low gusty wind.

Two figures are trudging along the road—two people, tired of sitting at home, who have come out to refresh themselves with clouds and stormy shadows, and rain-gusts, and dead furze. One of these people—the Archdeacon, who married Fanny Brandiscombe—walks regularly for a constitutional; he has an objection to getting over-stout. His companion, Miss Janet of the red petticoat, is the daughter of a less prosperous parson than himself, who married the Archdeacon's sister twenty years before. As the girl walks along her quick feet almost pass the heavy-gaitered steps; all the damp grey fogs and mist seem turning to roses on her cheeks; she has high arched eyebrows, stiff hair, circling grey eyes. Far off in the distance comes a third person pursuing them: the gentleman in the country gaiters, who is trying to meet them at the cross-road. He had come out oppressed by a sort of day-mare of chairs and tables; and by the exhausted atmosphere of human sameness pent up for twenty-four hours in Mrs. Brandiscombe's country-house, and by the thought of a meeting that seemed to him very ill-timed, and for which he did not feel prepared just at that special moment. His is a consciousness with a strain in it, an impetuous, and yet self-doubtful nature. No one would have suspected it, seeing the tall erect figure, the firm striding step. For my own part, I believe that strain to be the saving of an overbearing character. Hollis was not quite true to himself or to his own theories—sceptical as he was by way of being, self-interested as he announced himself, hasty in conclusion as he was; this mental reservation seemed to be a chink in the wall through which the light might penetrate. The little rift may be for good as well as for bad. Mr. Hollis, seeing a red dab of colour and a black dab through the mist, hurried along as quickly as he could, with his faults and virtues, crossing stones and ruts and rucks on his way, and vaulting over a stile, and he soon approached the pair, who were proceeding together apparently, but in reality straggling off to very distant cities and thoroughfares, and talking to each other in two different languages that neither could understand.

"I am very sorry, Janet," the Archdeacon was saying, with his nose up in the air (it was not unlike his niece's). "You do not suppose that I have not weighed it well over in my mind? It gives me the greatest concern to refuse you, and I heartily hope that no other vacancy will ever fall to my gift. Your father, with all his good qualities, is not the man for this one. There would be a general outcry; he would be the last person to wish me to act against my Convictions." The Archdeacon stepped out briskly, but his companion kept well up with him.

"*He* would," she was saying; "he never thinks of himself. But you know how good he is, uncle John, and your own convictions can't be changed by an outcry. And truth is truth, and if I were an archdeacon, and you were papa, I wouldn't mind what a few hateful, stupid, narrow-minded people said," cried the girl, more and more excited.

"I am very sorry, my dear, but it is my duty," began her uncle.

"Oh, uncle John, are you quite *sure* it is your duty," implored the girl, eagerly, "and not that you are afraid? God gives one one's relations——"

"And a conscience too," cried the Archdeacon, with a stride, angrily, "though you seem to have none. Enough of this, Janet. You can reserve your persuasions for Hollis; he is not a churchman, and may consult his inclinations. Ask him; Holmsdale is in his gift."

Janet blushed up, a deep red furious blush, and jumped, with a bitter pain suddenly in her heart, right away from her uncle's side, across a great pool that was lying reflecting the cloud-heaps. How desolate it all was: some smoke was drifting from a distant factory chimney; some figure far ahead was crossing the furze; some distant cock was crowing a melancholy crow; and the wind came fluttering against her face, and the tears started from her eyes.

"There are not two rights," she was thinking, indignantly. "Uncle John thinks that people get on best in both worlds at once. They don't, they don't, and he doesn't love his neighbour as himself, and he *ought* to help papa. I know it. How *can* he expect me to ask Mr. Hollis for his living. I can't, I won't—now of all times. Oh, how unhappy I am! Oh, how foolish I have been! Perhaps I shall forget about it all when I get home to my poor papa. Oh, how disappointed they will be." The grey eyes were still filling with tears, but the tears did her good, as she rubbed them away with her gauntleted fingers; she felt a hard gulping sensation in her throat, but she choked it down somehow as she hurried on.

Janet was an odd matter-of-fact young person, with a curious amount of courage in her composition. She was very young. She was not afraid of pain. She would inflict it upon herself with a remorseless determination. She was oddly defiant and mistrustful for her age, for she was very young—only eighteen, and young for eighteen. She looked upon herself as an experiment. We most of us have a vague idea of some character that we enact almost unconsciously: some of us look upon ourselves in the light of conclusions (this was the Archdeacon), others of tragedies, others of precepts. There are no end to the disguises and emblems of human nature. I have a friend who is a barometer, another a pair of slippers, another a sonata. I know a teapot (fem.), velocipedes of both genders, a harlequin, and a complete set of fire-irons. Mrs. Rowland might be looked upon as a soft hearth-rug comfortably spread out in the warmth of the blaze.

Meanwhile the experiment is hopping about in the bog, with stiff elfin locks blown by the winds, and grey eyes fixed. "Janet, come back into the pathway," says the Archdeacon, "and don't be foolish." Janet, who is used to obey, and who had spent a great part of her life under her uncle's orders, comes back, but she can't walk with him—she is too indignant for that—so she passes on in front, going on meanwhile with her self-experimentalizing. While the Archdeacon, not sorry to lay hold

of a grievance, continues, "Yes, in my days young women did not set so little store by the advice of their superiors." ("Uncles" did not sound well.) "You think there is something specially heroic in leaving at a time when your prospects may be materially affected—I am obliged to speak plainly—in leaving when your influence may be most important. Janet, I will not have you look at me like that. *I* think it is an act of headstrong self-will."

"Uncle John!" cried Janet, indignant. She was not afraid of pain, as I have said, and this was about the limit. She had a sort of curiosity to discover how much and how far she could bear. She had been well drilled in a school of repression and patience. Her mother was a whole course of such an education; her father's conscientious zigzags were another lesson in the art; to say nothing of money troubles without end, affairs going wrong, tempers going wrong, small store of sympathy at home, and now—now it seemed to her that her own troubles were in addition to all that had gone before. Whatever it all meant, Janet was determined not to yield weakly and meekly. What did she care for being unhappy? She could bear it as others had done before her. But she did care for this, that she should not lose one atom of the honest self-respect which was her own as yet,—the self-respect that was her right, her inheritance. Why should she put herself in a place to forfeit all of this? She was not pretty, thought Janet of the circling grey eyes, rings of grey and black under straight dark brows that were knit. A day or two ago—well, a day or two ago, she had been foolish and vain, and when her uncle, in his pompous, bungling way, said something about the reason why Mr. Hollis was staying on, she had only laughed in a delightful consciousness of power; but to-day she had heard a little word from Mr. Hollis himself that had first opened her eyes and disabused her—a little impatient word about hating the place and having no reason to like it; and as he spoke her experiments upon herself had begun that instant. The resolute Janet gave herself not one moment's thought, she shut the shutters as it were, pulled down the curtains, shut out the early dawn in her heart, tried to forget what growing sunlight gleam she had seen for an instant with dazzled eyes.

The Archdeacon, as he followed her, was also in no very pleasant state of mind. He was picking his way mentally as well as actually: on every side were pools and stones, and dangerous splashes. He was a kind-hearted man, and greatly troubled, although he would not own it to himself, and he clung to his conscience, which happened to be keeping to a moral sidepath out of the mud. He knew that for years his sister—poor Isabella, Janet's mother—had been looking forward to this living to make up to her for all her long troubles and anxieties. It was to make arid places fertile; to feed, clothe, teach the children; to steady the wavering faith of her husband; to raise them up from the depths into which their little home had been sinking, over-weighted as it was with anxieties, ill-humours, and children

and debt. Once the Archdeacon himself had looked forward to this deliverance for them all and his favourite Janet in particular; but now, in these troubled and dangerous times, to set a man like Tom Ireton—who never knew his own mind, and was converted by every ranter he came across—to set such a man as that to stem the dangerous current that had lately set in at Chawhampton, it was impossible; the whole country would cry out against it. Opinion didn't matter at Merton-le-Mere (this was the name of Janet's home); the country louts had no opinions beyond their cider and their pitchforks. Tom might preach himself black in the face, and they would be none the wiser. But at Chawhampton—it was impossible. The Archdeacon had a copy of the letter in his pocket in which he offered the living to Dr. Phillips—a man of his own mind, liberal, decided, with clear views of the future, as well as of the present; a man, like himself, fully awake to the importance of checking the dangerous advance of the tide.

"Tom writes that he has always spoken his mind, that he does not know what is coming, that he looks upon change as one of the fundamental laws of the universe. A clergyman has no business to look for change," the Archdeacon concludes; "and if he does he should not say so; if he says so he cannot possibly expect that I should give him my living. And this tiresome girl is as headstrong as her father."

And so they walked on for a minute or two, splashing through a slough of despond, far away from Coombe Common.

"It won't matter much being a little more or less unhappy," was Janet's conclusion. "I shan't mind very much. I don't mind things as other people do," and the girl turned away from the almost irresistible visions that seemed to pierce even through shutters and curtains. "Go, go, go; such things are not for me. I'm not a bit ashamed," thinks Janet. "There is no particular merit in being happy and successful. It's not for me, that is all. It is women like Mrs. Rowland who are made to be happy. Ah, how happy they must be." And Janet felt that though she might not look at it, that a dawn *was* there for some—for those who were outside in the bright open, watching from their vineyards and illumined by the golden beams.

IV.

"Here is a friend," said the Archdeacon, not sorry for the arrival of a third person, and calling Janet back with a start to the ruts, the mist, the common, as Hollis caught them up. Now that Hollis had come into the vista it seemed brighter to the girl than any sun-gilt paradise that she had been imagining. Indeed, the chances of life, unexpected and sad as they are, are also more satisfactory at times than the brightest visions of an ardent imagination. For visions partake always more or less of the visionary, and are hackneyed and incomplete just in those things where he fails himself. Reality comes with a wonder of novelty and a fresh

strength of its own, with a vividness that the dearest visions fail in. Has it ever happened to any one of us to ponder over some hopeless problem, over and over, and round and about, and at last in despair to give it up as unsolvable, and suddenly one day the door opens, a living answer enters, more complete and satisfactory than any we could ever conceive? The difficulties are over, the thing we could not realize is there before us. It may be a love that was wanted, or an intellect, or a strong will, or a friend, or a sympathy. There it is; no effort of yours has brought it, it has come; and the want being there, the new power is absorbed into the vacuum.

Janet had been facing the wind; when her uncle spoke she turned with bright looks, and stood straight, with flapping grey wings, waiting for Hollis to come up to her.

Brown-legged and black-bearded, with cheerful looks of recognition, the young man arrived across the sea of rain and chalk. As he looked at Janet it struck him that there was a something about her that he had never noticed before; something simple, noble, self-reliant. He thought as he came up that he had never done her looks justice, for he had never thought her even handsome till that minute. And Janet? At that minute she felt that she was free; she might feel some pain, there might be more to come, but she was free, she was no one's bondmaid.

"If you are going through the wood," said Mr. Hollis, cheerfully, "I can walk with you as far as the lodge."

"Is that on your way?" said the Archdeacon, stopping short. "Are you going to the Merediths now, or coming back to the house?"

"I am going now," said Hollis: "she begged me to come early. There is a short-cut from the lodge. I said good-by to my hostess before I came away, and told them to send on my things. I wonder what there is we could say to Miss Ireton to induce her to come over?"

"Janet does not know her own interest," said her uncle, testily, "when she persists in refusing such a very pleasant and well-timed invitation."

The Archdeacon's speech was anything but well-timed. Janet drew herself up.

"I am very sorry, I am wanted at home." She had taught herself her lesson, and could repeat it very glibly. As she spoke they had come to a gate, and George Hollis, who held it open for her as she passed, looked at her fixedly for an instant to see if this was a real reason or only an excuse. Janet saw his doubtful look, and her two eyes fell, and her bright cheeks blushed for her and then for themselves. Hollis with some temper let the gate go when she had passed. She was making an excuse,—she did not come because she would not,—she would not because . . . . There was no accounting for the vagaries of girls. Miss Ireton had guessed at his displeasure; she looked up defiantly—what was it to her? Then her heart smote her, for it was not a very hard one. "Don't think I am not very sorry," she said. "Who could help being

sorry? I shall never forget this happy time." The Archdeacon had waited behind a little to examine the gate; it was a curious hasp, and he wanted one of the same put up in his field to keep out irreverent cows.

"I am so used to come and to go," said Hollis, in a snappish voice, "that I leave fewer regrets behind me than you do. I have no special reason for liking Brand House." It was a cross speech, and only meant that he was offended. Janet thought it meant, not that he was offended, but utterly indifferent. It did not pain her much. This was what she had been expecting ever since her little talk with Mrs. Brandiscombe. The Archdeacon still lingered and the two young people walked on in silence. They had left the common behind them at last, and come into a wild green park. It seemed the last vestige of the thick woods that had once covered the country, reaching down to the sea almost. Janet, with an impatient, quick step or two, had gone a-head,—a bright figure against the gloom, the grey, the mist: the branches seemed heavy with it, ivy tendrils glistened in the damp, the mosses were green upon the silver trunks, and the lichens were opening wide their grey mouths. There was a faint aromatic scent in the air from the many fir-cones and spikes; from the golden drops of turpentine that were oozing from the bark; from the damp sweet decay all about, of dying leaves and spreading creepers. And then above were the bare branches, full with the buds of the coming spring; decay, and life, and change, in a sweet, subdued, silent glen, where the dim daylight came dimmer still through the crossing rustle of the beech branches. "This is a lovely sort of Hades," said Hollis, coming to himself again, and looking about.

"I believe it is Meredith's property," said the Archdeacon, who had caught them up; "the place wants thinning, but I can quite understand a man's reluctance to cut down his own trees."

"I shall ask him what he is about," said Hollis. "I know the place of old. I used to come here when my father lived at Portsmouth."

Janet heard so far, and walked on faster to get out of the sound of their voices. Every word and every little event that had happened for the last hour or two, seemed to confirm her more and more in the new interpretation that Mrs. Brandiscombe's words had given to the small events that were so interesting to her. She had been played with, she had been used as a screen to conceal real feelings and interests that were unknown to her. . . . Her bright cheeks blushed with shame as she rushed along, her grey eyes had an odd misty look of anger in them, she picked up a dried stick, upon which some little lichens were clinging still, and began beating it against the stems on either side of the pathway; it soon broke; and she flung the pieces away impatiently. A word had been enough to make her happy, a word had been enough to disabuse her. And yet it was hard, she thought, that this her last walk should be so spoiled; he might be friendly just this last time. And then she waited for them to come up and tried to make friends again, speaking of one thing and

another, for she was thinking they might never meet again. Among other things she asked Hollis if he had ever met her friend Mrs. Rowland.

"Is it a case of devoted ladies' friendship?" the young man asked, in his turn.

"Why do you laugh at women's friendships?" said Janet, gently. "Mrs. Rowland would do anything for me." And then she added, with a fierce look at the poor Archdeacon, "I don't think the kindest men do things only because one asks them. I had much sooner trust a woman."

Janet felt quite ashamed, because, instead of snubbing her, the Archdeacon interposed quite mildly—

"My dear child, that is because you are utterly unreasonable, every one of you, and never stop to think of the obstacles there may be in the way. Mrs. Rowland is charming, but she would be just as unreasonable in granting as you would be in asking."

"I think men invent obstacles," said Janet, mollified a little, "for the pleasure of thinking themselves reasonable in not overcoming them."

"I wish you would try *me* some day, Miss Ireton," said Hollis, laughing; "I should like to do something, reasonable or not, and prove myself as staunch a friend as Mrs. Rowland."

He wondered why a look of pain, followed by a burning blush, came into the girl's face. Instead of answering, she looked away down the long dim avenue by which they had been coming. They had reached the little lodge by this time, where their roads divided. Janet's heart began to beat a little; she felt her uncle's mild inquiring glance fixed upon her; she felt as if she hated him almost at that instant. How could he expect it; how could he allow her to humiliate herself by asking strangers for what was his own to bestow! It was all horrid, all except Hollis's kindness. She clenched her left hand tight as she suddenly said "Good-by; I am tired, I want to go home. Please don't come back with me," said the poor child. "I had rather go back alone; I should like it best."

She was too much in earnest to be other than cold. Hollis looked disappointed. The Archdeacon, who had been counting on this final walk to bring about some sort of explanation, looked annoyed. He offered to walk on a little way with the young man, feeling it was his part to make up to him for Janet's ungraciousness by every little attention in his power. Notwithstanding his wife's demurs and Mrs. Brandiscombe's solemn head-shakes, he had been of opinion that Hollis was very much attracted by his young niece. It was a most desirable thing in every respect; and if Dr. Phillips accepted Chawhampton, Holmesdale, his present living, would be in Hollis's gift, &c. &c. Poor Janet! She walked away for a little distance, and then she stood for an instant looking back after Hollis and her uncle. Her heart was very heavy, her steps lagged dull and wearily. She might have stayed; she might have seen him again and again; but now she was going to-

morrow; it was all settled; it was good-by! Had she done right? Alas! how could she tell; why was she not as other girls are, befriended, advised, and comforted? why was she all alone to work out right and wrong from this tangle? "I should like to do something, reasonable or not." Ah, what did he mean? Only kindness, only friendship. If she asked Hollis to help her, this was clear—she could never see him again; never, never. What, another gate? She tried to open it; it was stiff, and hurt her fingers. Janet stamped in a sort of despair. Give her a living! She might as well ask Hollis for the moon. She looked back once more: there were the two dark figures, walking away with all her best hopes, at the end of the long dark alley; then she got the gate open and trudged on. Everything seemed changed: no life, no promise, only decay; the leaves were rotting all about, a great gust of smoky mist seemed falling upon her, the little laurel-bushes alone looked green and flourishing. Janet was shivering by the time she got to the house; she was jaded and tired. Bodies are apt to be dull when the spirits are weary.

V.

Janet's was a big state-room at the end of the passage, with tall windows looking blank out upon the mist and the laurel-walks along which she had just come. There was old-fashioned furniture, in stately preparation for the guests who came to inhabit it; there were medicine-spoons of every shape and size, medicine-glasses, cap-stands, leg-rests; there was a sofa, with various-shaped cushions; there was a boot-jack. It would have all seemed more suitable to one of the dowager ladies, Mrs. Brandiscombe's contemporaries, than to Janet Ireton, who did not require any of these appliances. She threw her hat upon the great four-post bed; she fell into the great arm-chair, and sat curled up in the seat, with her head resting on the arm and her hand hanging over—she tried to think it all out calmly for herself, but her heart beat almost too impetuously. Here was the case. She had been a goose, and had fancied that a few civil words meant a life-long devotion. She was not ashamed of herself; she had found out her mistake in time, and instantly determined to avoid any possible misunderstanding in future. But now, to do as her uncle wished,—to ask Mr. Hollis, whom of all other people in the whole world she wished to avoid, for so great a mark of favour,—ah! it was too much; she would not, she could not. Then Janet thought no more, but sat staring at the great pier-glass; then she jumped up, and began walking round and round the room. Why did everything seem to jar upon her? Her dress caught in a table-corner as she went along, she shook it free impatiently; a chair stood a little crooked, and the slanting lines worried her, but when she had put it straight she was no calmer than she had been before.

Janet of the even nerves could not understand this strange new phase. It frightened her and horrified her. She found herself asking

herself, "Why did he ask me so often to go to the Merediths'? He could not know, he did not know, how hard it was to refuse. Ah, it was cruel, yes, cruel, to make such a play—if it was play." A deep, burning blush of indignation came into her cheeks, as she felt in her deepest heart of hearts what happiness was *not*. She would not trust herself to think what it might be. Ah, if she had any one to go to now, as other girls had,—girls who were loved and sympathized with, and comforted, and guarded from harm. Her father was no guide, dearly as she loved him. She loved her uncle, but she mistrusted him; he was too complicated a mind for a straightforward nature like Janet's. Her home was a house full of cracks and darns to be repaired, and children to be patched and borne with,—not much else; her mother's love was with the boys.

Then, of course, came a reaction, and the thought that, though Mr. Hollis's civil speeches meant nothing in one sense, they might mean something in another. He had said he would gladly help her; perhaps he meant what he said. He could not know of her father unless she told him. It was her duty to do what she could, even in a hopeless endeavour like this one. Should she ever forgive herself if, because it was horrible to speak, she was silent, and by this silence did her father an injury? It was a shame that she should have to do such a thing; she who had always held her head so high, and vowed that no poverty, no trouble should ever bring her low. Janet stamped impatiently at the thought. Then came a ray of relief. She should not see him again. But she might write, said her officious conscience; she might send the letter by the messenger who carried over his luggage. The poor persecuted girl ran with a sort of leap across the room to the writing-table, where the old ladies were accustomed to carry on their correspondence in their delicate old-fashioned handwriting, "hastening to reply to one another's favours of the 14th, and to announce their safe arrival," &c. Poor Janet began writing in a desperate hurry, flying over the paper as if afraid that if she paused for one instant her courage would fail, her pen fly away, her paper slip from under her fingers:

"Dear Mr. Hollis,—I am going to take a great liberty; if you never forgive me I cannot help it. I feel I *must* say what I am going to say. Perhaps if we ever meet again you may tell me that you do forgive me, though I almost fear that this letter may make you think ill of us all.

"I am going home to-morrow to my father, who is the best father, the truest gentleman, that ever lived. He is very very anxious and suffering, and for years we had hoped that my uncle would have appointed him to Chawhampton when it fell vacant. This he now says he cannot do, and he has given it to Dr. Phillips, the vicar of Holmesdale. Will you give papa Holmesdale? You do not know how good he is. He speaks what he thinks. My uncle calls him impressionable and unguarded. I do not want to belong to a guarded religion, but then I am my father's daughter; a minute ago you said, 'If ever I can do anything for you.' I know it meant only commonplace service, not this. I know I am grasping and presumptuous. What can I do? how can I not ask you when I think of my dearest father's many many cares?

"Yours truly,

"Janet Ireton."

Janet did not trust herself even to read the blotted page. It was blotted, but she dared not write it out; she sealed it up in the envelope, and then threw the letter from her on the floor; and then, flinging her head down over her arms upon the table, she burst out crying, sobbing, as if her heart would break. Her pride seemed hurt, crushed, soiled; her maiden dignity seemed sacrificed. Any one, any one else in all the world she could have asked without shame, but this pang was like heart's blood given drop by drop. Had he not wounded her already, made a play and pretence of his liking for her? Before this there might have been a chance that some day they might have met again and been friends. Now, never, never; she would never see him; she had humiliated herself before him; she would avoid him, hide out of his way. "Oh, papa, my dear papa," sobbed Janet, with another great burst of tears.

A noise in the passage outside reminded her that there was no time to lose, and she ran out to stop a servant and to ask if Mr. Hollis's luggage was going to the Mount.

"The luggage has gone, ma'am," said the housemaid, placidly. "Would you please to like your fire lighted?"

"Gone!" repeated Janet, stupidly. It seemed impossible that when all the powers of her mind and will and conscience had been brought together to write the letter, so small a thing should come to prevent the fulfilment of her scheme.

"It is an omen," thought the girl, that I need not send the letter. "Yes, please, light my fire," she said to the housemaid, and a momentary thought of relief unspeakable, of a burning letter, of a mind at ease, came to beguile her.

The maid came back in a minute, saying she had been mistaken, the cart had not yet gone. Was that the letter?—(poor Janet hastily dropped her composition into the woman's hand.) The butler had desired her to say that Mrs. Rowland was in the drawing-room, and had been asking for Miss Ireton.

Caroline come! This was, indeed, a ray of comfort in all Janet's despairing troubles. What kind fate had sent her? Here was the friend, the adviser, and sympathizer for whom she had been longing.

VI.

As Janet burst into the drawing-room Mrs. Rowland looked up, with a little exclamation of delight, and held out her arms. The widow was installed by the fire. She had not moved for the last half hour or more. While Janet had been going through so much, Caroline had warmed her little feet, smoothed her soft hair, and looked at the clock a dozen times. "My dear child," she is saying, "how glad I am to see you, how delightful this is, what have you been doing? Where have you been? I hoped I should find you. Come and sit down, and tell me all about yourself. Aunt Brandiscombe won't be back for half-an hour at least." Then they

both kissed each other again, and then came that moment's silence which comes when people's liking for each other exceeds their habit of intimacy.

Mrs. Rowland, in her pleasure, laid hands upon the poker, and was on the point of stirring up the fire to a brighter welcome, when Janet, with a little cry of alarm even in her first greeting, tore it out of her friend's hand. "Not this one, the little black one, Caroline; the bright one is *never* used." Janet had not been so long away from schoolroom restrictions as her friend "Silly child!" said Mrs. Rowland impatiently, relinquishing the shining steel, and taking Janet's soft warm hand instead into her own. Janet sat looking up with honest eyes full of admiration. She had all a young girl's enthusiasm for her friend. Miss Ireton used to think sometimes that Mrs. Rowland was like music moving on continuously from one modulation to another, never hurrying, never lagging, flowing on to a rhythm of her own. "Now I," thought poor Janet, "I go in jerks and jigs; sometimes I stop altogether, sometimes I crash out ever so many false notes." She forgot that she was young, that Caroline had had a longer time to learn to play upon the instrument which had been granted her. Janet's tunes were very sweet and gay if she had but known it. For her there was no cause to fear, but, alas! for those who can never master the subtle harmonies of life! It seems hard, indeed, if all the long, patient practice of years is to produce no harmonious sound; no corresponding chords in answer. Perhaps, though these sad cracked strains to our dull ears may seem to jar so painfully, they belong to a wider song and a mightier symphony than any which we can apprehend.

"Now tell me all about yourself and your people, and everything I want to know," said Mrs. Rowland, settling herself comfortably in the blaze.

"All!" said the girl. "That would be a melancholy story. Papa is more out of spirits, mamma more anxious; and I—I am beginning to think that everything is disappointing, except seeing one's friends sometimes," said Janet, as her eyes smiled and then filled up with tears.

As Janet looked at her, Caroline could not help being touched by the sad looks in the two grey eyes. The widow stooped and kissed the girl's forehead. "I am so glad you are going to be here," said Mrs. Rowland. "I could not bear to think of a *tête-à-tête* with aunt Brandiscombe till Monday. But now I shall have you to support me."

"But you won't," said Janet bluntly and blushing, "for I'm going to-morrow. I have been very happy here—I'm very sorry to go, but I must."

There was a jar in Janet's voice as she spoke which struck Mrs. Rowland, who was usually quick to hear what people didn't say, as well as what they said. She had a great many curious gifts and quicknesses of the same sort.

"You must not desert me in this unkind way," she said. "I want to talk over all sorts of things with you. First of all, tell me why you must go. I had hoped to persuade you to come home with me on Monday, and see my little girls."

"How I should like it some day," said grateful Janet; "but I cannot stay here any longer."

"Why cannot you stay?" said Mrs. Rowland. "You tiresome girl, what is it all about? Is there any one you want to avoid?"

Janet pulled her hand away instinctively. "I am wanted," she said. "I have had a disappointment." Caroline looked full of sympathy, and yet a little amused. "We have been so longing that papa might be appointed to Chawhampton, and now my uncle refuses"—(Caroline looked quite grave and much less interested)—"and you don't know what it is," Janet went on, "to wait and hope and wait, and fail at last. . . . "

The widow sighed. "Waiting! I never liked waiting much," she said.

"Oh, Caroline!" cried the girl," I have so longed for some one to speak to all these past days. It is so difficult to settle for oneself always, to know what is right, and when it is right to go against the wishes of people older than oneself. Of course I love papa most of all. I would do anything in the whole world for him."

"You must marry, Janet," said Mrs. Rowland, in a cheerful voice, drawing her big chair in a little nearer to the fire. "That is what you must do, then you will have some one to consult with. You must come and stay with me, and I shall introduce some nice eligible young men to you."

"Marry! Oh, Caroline!" said Janet, hurt as young people are who ask you for bread and you give them a stone. (Mrs. Rowland was twisting her own flashing guard-ring round and round upon her finger.) "What are you saying? It is like aunt Fanny, who knows no better—but *you!* Can people marry like that? Is there nothing more wanting?—nothing more solemn and sacred in marriage than a few dinner-parties and an eligible young man?"

Caroline coloured a little. She told herself in her heart that Janet was right, but she only said, "Life is very matter-of-fact, my poor Janet, as you will find; and after all an eligible young man is human though eligible. And now tell me who he is, for I know now there is somebody special in the case."

But Janet did not answer. She was still hurt. Was this the way they all felt—her uncle, her aunt, and now her friend from whom she had hoped for something more? Was this the way they spoke of feelings that seemed almost sacred to her.

"Are you vexed, Janet dear?" said Mrs. Rowland at last.

"No," said Janet, "only a little unhappy. I want to do right and *feel* right, and when I saw you I thought you would help me, for I had no one else to ask."

"Dear Janet, you know I am always ready and glad to help you. Tell me what it is all about," said Mrs. Rowland, leaning forward with a gentle little rustling, and at the same time looks of such real kindness and sympathy that Janet's shyness and stiffness melted.

"It is about papa, as I told you," said she, colouring. "We have so hoped that my uncle would give him Chawhampton, and—and now he

wants me to ask some one else for a smaller living which will be vacant."

"Well," said Mrs. Rowland, "I always detested the Archdeacon; it is just like him; and is there no chance of your getting the smaller living?"

"No; why *should* there be?" cried the girl; "that is what is so horrible."

"Whose gift is it in?" asked Mrs. Rowland, with a faint curiosity.

"It is Mr. Hollis's living," said poor Janet. "He went away just now; he has been here a week; he is gone to the Merediths now. He is very kind, *too* kind; and now, perhaps, you know all," cried the girl, impetuously, who had in those two words said more than she had meant; "but I know I can trust you, and that you will keep my secret. I am talking nonsense, there is no secret to keep. Dear Caroline, I was obliged to ask him. It has been so horrible. But I won't stay; I know I am right to go."

Caroline was silent for an instant. "What did he say?" she asked, in a low voice.

"I did not say it, I wrote it," said Janet. "The letter is going now. You know him better than I do," she implored. "*Can't* I trust him? He *will* understand. He *won't* think it forward?" cried the girl, in an agony. "Caroline, you know the world; tell me I did not do wrong; that I can trust him?" she implored.

Miss Ireton was so agitated on her own account that she did not notice her friend's odd changing looks.

"If you take my advice, Janet, you will trust nobody," said Caroline, coldly, "beyond a certain point. If two people were alone in the world they might trust each other, but think how many claims, memories, doubts, difficulties, there are!" Then Caroline thought for an instant, and reflected upon a past light in her old friend Mr. Hollis's character. She was trying to be true to her friendship, though sympathy she had not to give. There was a moment's struggle and an evil impulse of mischief-making to be overcome before she spoke. For my poor Caroline is no model woman, alas! only a very, very human creature; but she spoke at last, to the best of her wisdom, remembering his old impatience and fastidiousness. Had he not left her for a suspicion? "If that letter goes, Janet," she said, still coldly, "I am afraid you will never see George Hollis again."

"Do you think I ever expect to see him again?" exclaimed Janet, indignant. "I am going away; I will never, never see him any more. There is only friendship or I *could* not ask. There is some one else he loves. It has only been liking for me." Then she went on more fluently, "Just now, when I came down to you, I found another note from Mrs. Meredith, to ask me there. But I shall not go." And Janet thrust a little pink missive, with "Dear Miss Ireton—persuade you—so disappointed all of us—a few days only—ever sincerely yours," &c., into Caroline's hand. Then she covered her burning cheeks from the fire, and sat quite still without speaking.

Caroline, too, was silent. She could not but believe the girl's eager honesty. Once more she felt ashamed before her. She envied her, and a gentler thought of what might have been came to her mind.

As for Janet, she was shaken ; her faith in her friend was not touched, but her faith in human nature had received a rude blow. Could Caroline be right ? was no one to be trusted ? Was this the experience of life that people spoke of mysteriously : not one, not one just man in Edom ? The two sat staring at the smouldering log. Janet's foot was tapping impatiently against the fender, and the obnoxious steel poker came down with a crash. How strangely people feel round and about and under and over the things that really disquiet them. This crash disturbed Mrs. Rowland more apparently than all that had gone before.

"Do take care, my dear. Who told you about this—this engagement of Mr. Hollis ? " she said, sharply.

"Mrs. Brandiscombe told me a little," said Janet. "It was some one he knew long ago ; he himself said something one day. He told me that all his life he had only really loved one woman for years. He said it happened here, at this very house, that he saw her last, and he hated the place. He was called from her suddenly, but she deceived him in some way—never answered his letters. I don't know more of the story. I only know how he loved her."

Mrs. Rowland didn't speak or move, but sat as if she had not listened, with the screen held up between her soft cheeks and the angry blaze ; the screen trembled a little in her hand. At last, with a sudden, quick motion, she got up and walked slowly away to the end of the room where she had been standing when she first entered. Then she came back, smiling sadly. One hand was pressed against her heart. There was a bright very sweet expression on her face that Janet could not see, for she was still staring at the fire.

"Janet," said Mrs. Rowland, in a low voice, "I want to say that I was wrong, my dear, in what I said just now. You may trust George Hollis. I did not do him justice. He is an honourable man. Do not be unhappy. I shall see him to-morrow, and—and try to explain." She was speaking still, and looking intently at Janet, who had started up from her seat ; when the clock struck five, and the butler and his assistant came in with the tea.

"Mrs. Brandiscombe begged that you would not wait for her if she was after five," said the well-drilled butler.

Janet had blushed up, and it was her turn to look a little strangely. "I won't have any tea, my head aches," she said. "Is that the sun setting ? I think I will take another turn. Don't mind me, I—I will come back."

She spoke in a nervous and agitated way, she did not know exactly what had been happening ; but somehow Mrs. Rowland's words no longer comforted her ; even her kindness failed to touch her. She felt there was something between them ; she *almost* guessed the secret. Poor child ! she did not want to know more, and meekly accepted her fate as a matter

of course. But a living, breathing rival there before her was a different thing from the vague imaginations of a possibility. She could not sit quietly and hand milk and sugar. She felt faint for want of air. She caught up a cloak in the hall. She ran down some servants' passage, and out by some back-door into the open air. She did not see as she crossed the hall that some one was coming in at the front door.

VII.

Janet was a proud girl, as I have said. The sort of guess which she had made,—the idea that Mrs. Rowland herself was the woman whom George Hollis loved,—was the last drop in her cup. What had she been doing? Had she been mad, blind, dull? Had she known, she would have bitten out her tongue sooner than have spoken to Caroline as she had done. Poor Janet! She exaggerated, as young people do, the horrors of her situation; she painfully shrunk from the thought. "Oh, I wish I was at home, I wish I was at home!"—this was her one thought now. She hurried out into the garden once more, across the front lawn, round to the back of the house. The air revived her. With the evening the wind had gone down, or if it blew it came in softer and more comforting gushes. Where the clouds had parted over the sea a sunset light was breaking, turning grey waters to blue, gilding pale hills with heavenly alchemy. What was this? A quick gleam—a darting fiery stream from behind the rent cloud. Suddenly the field was in a western blaze; the donkey was browsing in a dazzling, lovely wave of rainbow light. Was this a new created world of cloud and light? Broken, glittering, rainy, divinely fresh, the clouds and the sunlight were parting, drifting, reflecting one another. Here and there the trees stood in the shade; here and there in the sweet sudden radiance the grasses were golden at Janet's feet; a dazzling flame seemed rising from the sea. Janet's hair and clothes were on fire; she felt as if this fresh light were brightening her heavy heart. It stirred with a thrill of gratitude and love for such sweet wonders. As she stood there still, Janet heard the distant stable-clock strike the half-hour. She began to breathe a little more quietly: a few more hours and she would be gone, she thought. Once safe home she would try never to think of this past bit of her life again.

* * * * *

By a not very extraordinary chance it was Hollis coming who had been at the front door in search of Janet. He had met the luggage-cart about a mile from the house, having walked back part of the way with the Archdeacon to finish the discussion of some arrangements which they had been talking over. The cart stopped, the driver, knowing Hollis, touched his hat, and saying, "I have a letter for you, sir," put Janet's poor little scrawl into the young man's hand. Poor Janet! had she known that Hollis had come back to answer it himself, no garden end would

have been distant enough for her to hide in. I do believe she would have splashed straight into the sea to avoid him.

Meanwhile Mr. Hollis had walked into the drawing-room in search of her, and found himself face to face with the very person he had wished to avoid. He thought Mrs. Rowland was not coming till six, and had calculated on a whole half-hour before her arrival. After all it was no very terrible meeting—a pretty gentlewoman, with a kind face and a friendly greeting, a good fire burning, a comfortable chair (the very one where Janet had been sitting) drawn up to it. Who shall describe the half-formed thoughts that passed through Caroline's mind as he came up to her, thoughts of herself, then of Janet, then of self again.

"How do you do?" said Mrs. Rowland. "I hear you only left to-day. I hoped I should see you, though I was afraid I might miss you altogether." She spoke not reproachfully, but with unaffected interest and just a little regret in her voice. Caroline could make the words she used mean anything she liked besides their natural meaning. Hollis, who, to tell the truth, had been unfeignedly sorry to see her at first, for her presence jarred upon him just then, felt mollified by her kindness, notwithstanding the implacability of his disposition. "My aunt will be here directly," Mrs. Rowland went on. "Won't you sit down? We have not met since Florence." Caroline was not kinder than she had been before, but Hollis could not help thinking there was a difference; she was more interested, more agitated, more like the Carry Russell of old days than the gentle, mature, accomplished lady he had seen of late. There was a minute's silence: and Hollis asked after the children, and then Mrs. Rowland began once more: "I am glad to have seen you," she said. "I have been hearing of you from a friend of mine." Mrs. Rowland felt her heart beat violently for a moment.

"What have you been hearing about me?" Hollis asked, with a smile. Caroline resolutely put her old self back into the corner, and then she became quite calm again, and could look up quietly into his face (he stood with his back to the fire for he would not sit down), and try to read what was written there. "Janet was in great trouble, poor child," said Mrs. Rowland. "She had some idea that it was her duty to ask you for something for her father, and that she should forfeit your good opinion for ever." Caroline breathed a long breath as she finished this careless little speech. She had done it. Done her best to help her poor little trouble-hearted sister in her need. Had it been an effort? It hardly seemed to her now that it was one. She blushed, and it was a self-approving little glow from her heart in her face, as she again looked up quietly to see how her speech had been taken.

"*My* good opinion!" said Hollis, uneasily.

"I advised her . . . not to ask you," said the widow, going on with her knitting as quietly as she knew how. She put in her needles triumphantly and travelled on somehow, but little Tom never wore that particular stocking. "A girl—a very young one, I mean, like Janet—cannot

know life,—cannot guess how the simplest and most straightforward actions may be misread and misunderstood, and the Archdeacon is an old schemer. When Janet asked me if she could not trust *you*, I said that no one was to be trusted."

Hollis looked at Mrs. Rowland more and more surprised. What was she talking about; what was her meaning; was she talking of the past? Surely,—and the old feeling of something like scorn for the woman who had sold herself seemed to come over him,—he had not been to blame or failed in trust.

"But I did not know then," Caroline went on, "that her instinct was right, that I had done you injustice." And Mrs. Rowland looked up with two bright shining orbs. "Something Janet said made me understand it all. Do you know that uncle Brandiscombe told me you were gone, George? but they never gave me any letter. I am glad to meet you, to know how it all happened. I had thought of John before I knew you, but I was very unhappy for a time, though I am not fixed and deep like Janet: but I think my poor John would like you to think better of me than you can have done," said Mrs. Rowland, smiling through her tears. "And you know when I did not hear, I thought you had never . . ." She could not finish her sentence.

Caroline's tears were coming faster and faster. Hollis touched, and surprised, and embarrassed, had taken her hand and kissed it. He was still standing by the fire and looking at the gentle bent head:

"You mustn't think me better than I am," said he, reddening. "I guessed there had been some false play: but your cousin had told me of Mr. Rowland's admiration. I was too proud to ask for an explanation. I don't deserve, I shall never forget your goodness."

As he spoke the sun was setting and the evening lights were shining in, and reflected from the western window with dazzling abruptness from one angle to another in the many dim glasses. For one instant the past was present again to the widow, but only for an instant. With an effort she put it all from her. No—she would be true to Janet and to her own new instincts. She would not try now to take advantage of his old feelings.

"I suppose," said Caroline, wiping her eyes, and faltering and smiling, "there would be no good in living on if one did not every now and then understand things that seemed strange, and learn to be just to old friends, and to guess at things unexpressed as well as expressed in life. I have been happier than I deserve, and this will make my past life dearer to me. But I like to think that I shall do you justice at last, and that you are not one of those who would willingly inflict pain on a true-hearted girl." The next instant she was thankful that she had so spoken, for Hollis began again with some emotion.

"I don't know how to thank you now," he said, "but I assure you I understand your real and most friendly meaning." And then he added, "If ever I may speak for Janet as well as for myself; for to you I will confess that I love her——"

A sound of carriage-wheels, of doors, of approaching voices in the hall, made them both stop short.

"It is my aunt come in from her drive," said Mrs. Rowland hastily. "I saw Janet in the garden just now,—if you like you can go out through that window."

Hollis thanked her with a look, and hurried across the room to the western window, which he opened, and through which he stepped out into the evening gleam. Caroline went to close it after him, and stood for an instant watching him as he went striding across the grass.

Was this all? It seemed a tame conclusion to her few minutes' excitement. He had forgotten her great explanation already, and was hurrying across the field to where Janet was standing quite still in the gleam of the sudden lights. She seemed gazing seawards at the dying reflections there. Caroline could watch her old youthful visions striding away with a more tranquil spirit than in former days. He had loved her once—now he would be her friend—and so she was content. And so with sad yet gentle eyes she watched the two young people that were to live her life, feel her feelings, taking up the thread of her existence where she had left it broken.

Meanwhile out in the field the end of my story, such as it is, is being told in the bright falling radiance, which poor Janet cannot find it in her heart to admire much; she has no presentiment that all may be well, only shame at her heart. The donkey is browsing beside her, but it takes to its heels and scampers off when Hollis comes into the field. Janet does not even look round; she stands quite still, looking at drifting lights, and clouds, and rainbow beams with a pale, scared face. It shocks George Hollis when he gets near enough to see it. He has never seen her before without her sweet natural roses. He comes near and calls her name. As for Janet, seeing him, she stares for an instant—it is so inconceivable and unexpected. Why has he come? Janet thinks where shall she escape, and then all her strength goes; she stands quite still like a maiden of stone or a pillar of salt; it is no use trying to speak as usual or to look unconscious,—she can only stand still.

"I came back to speak to you," said Hollis, in his usual voice, trying to reassure her. "I met the carrier just now, and he gave me your letter. I hope you don't regret having written it," he said, hurriedly. "You don't know what pleasure it gives me to do anything to serve you. I had already proposed the exchange to your uncle when I got your note. Dear Janet, don't look so overwhelmed," Hollis continued, touched by the sudden rush of light and happiness and sweetness in her face; "only give me a right to serve you always, and then you can ask me what you will."

When Caroline came to the window again she saw the two walking, slowly, arm-in-arm towards the house, and then she knew what Janet's answer had been.

At Rome.

What came we forth to see? a prima donna
Caressed and fêted by an idle crowd?
Or would we do some favoured princeling honour
That thus we herd so close, and talk so loud?

Pushing and struggling, fighting, crushing, shouting,
What are these motley gazers here to seek,
Like merry-makers on a summer outing?
'Tis but the services of Holy Week.

The pious Romans thank the Virgin Mary,
For pockets heavy and for feelings light;
And most devoutly mulct the *forestieri*
Of a round number of strange coins per night.

The Eternal City swarms with eager strangers
From every quarter of the busy earth;
Who fill the temples, like the money-changers,
And say some prayers—for what they may be worth.

In never-ending tide of restless motion,
They come to burn, in fashion rather odd,
The incense of their polyglot devotion,
Before the altars of the Latin God.

As flock the Londoners to Epsom races,
Or form a "queue" to see the newest play,
So do the pilgrim-tourists fight for places
Before the chapels in their zeal to pray.

From holy place to holy place they flit,
To "do" as many churches as they can;
And humbly kneeling, for the fun of it,
They climb the staircase of the Lateran.

Here a fair maid from melancholy * Erin,—
Where by Swiss bayonets the way is barred,
Nor Heaven, nor Pope, nor Antonelli fearing,—
Breaks through the lines of the astonished guard.

* The epithet rests, it will be remembered, on high authority.

In customary suit of solemn black,
With string of beads and veil *à l'Espagnole*,
She means to "see it all;" to keep her back
Would be to peril her immortal soul.

There a slim youth, while all but he are kneeling,
Through levelled opera-glass looks down on them,
When round the Sistine's pictured roof is pealing
Our buried Lord's majestic Requiem.

For him each storied wonder of the globe is
"The sort of thing a fellow ought to see;"
And so he patronized *Ora pro nobis*,
And wanted to encore the *Tenebræ*.

Stranger! what though these sounds and sights be grandest
Of all that on Earth's surface can be found?
Remember that the place whereon thou standest,
Be thy creed what it may, is holy ground.

Yet I have gaped and worshipped with the rest—
I, too, beneath St. Peter's lofty dome
Have seen, in all their rainbow-colours dressed,
The tinselled glories of monastic Rome;

Have heard the Pontiff's ringing voice bestow,
Mid cheering multitudes and flags unfurled,
Borne by the cannon of St. Angelo,
His blessing on the "City and the World;"

Have seen—and thrilled with wonder as I gazed—
Ablaze with living lines of golden light,
Like some fire-throne for Arimanes raised,
The great Basilica burn through the night;

Have heard the trumpet-notes of Easter day
(Stones on the lake translated into sound,)
In strange unearthly music float away,
Their silver echoes circling all around:

But I would wander from the crowd apart,
While heads were bowed and tuneful voices sang,
And through the deep recesses of my heart
A still small voice in solemn warning rang.

"O vanity of vanities! ye seem,
Ye pomps and fineries of cleric state,
To make this text the matter of your theme,
That God is little, and that Man is great.

"Is this parade of priestly wealth and splendour
The lesson of the simple Gospel-word?
Is this the sacrifice of self-surrender
Taught by the lowly followers of the Lord?

"In that bent form, with lace and gold bedizened,
Wrapt in the incense of idolatry,
Are the old spirit and old heart imprisoned
Of the poor fisherman of Galilee?

"Do we, who broider thus the garment's hem,
Think of the swaddling-clothes the child had on?
Grace we the casket, to neglect the gem?
Forget we quite the manger for the throne?

"How long, O Lord, how long? Must then for ever
The idle throng deface thy sacred walls?
Will mighty Rome throw off these trappings never?
Oh, of her prelates and her cardinals

"If there be one who with his faith not palters,
But holds the truths divine not taught in vain,
And if about her desecrated altars
One shred of true religion yet remain,

"Among their ranks will not the late avenger
Rise, as of old the Saviour rose in wrath,
O'erthrow the tables of the money-changer,
And scourge the rout of mummers from his path?

"Or will the waters break from Earth asunder,
In some new flood the sons of pride to drown,
And the insulted Heavens descend in thunder
Upon this masque of impious mockery down?"

* * * * *

While thus in moralizing mood I pondered,
I turned me from the hum of men alone;
And, as my vagrant fancy led me, wandered
Amid the maze of monumented stone.

The crowd their favourite lions had deserted—
Left galleries and ruins in the lurch;
The cicerone's glory had departed,
For 'twas the proper thing to be at church.

So at my will I strayed from place to place,
From classic shrines to modern studios—
Now musing spell-bound, where Our Lady's * face
In nameless godhead from the canvas glows.

Now, from the still Campagna's desolate rise,
I saw the hills with jealous clasp enfold
The lingering sunlight, while the seaward skies
Paled slowly round the melting disc of gold;

Now gazed, ere yet on dome and tower had died
The glory of the Roman afterglow,
Over the map-like city lying wide,
Half-dreaming, from the Monte Mario.

Traveller, do thou the like; and wouldst thou learn
How Rome her faithful votaries enthralls
With all the memories that breathe and burn
Within the magic circle of her walls,

Leave pomp of priest and track of guide-led tourist:
And drink of history at the fountain-head;
For living minds and living things are poorest
In that vast mausoleum of the dead.

There, where the stately Barberini palace,
Like some new Nimrod's fabric Heavenward climbs,
Enduring monument of Christian malice,
By outrage wrested from the Pagan times; †

* The Madonna of Foligno.

† "Quod non fecerunt barbari, fecerunt Barberini."

Where, lulled and drowsy with the distant hum,
The sentinel keeps watch upon the town,
And from the heights of old Janiculum
On Father Tiber's yellow face looks down;

Where in their southern grace the moonbeams play
On Caracalla's tesselated floors,
And rescue from the garish light of day
The Colosseum's ghostly corridors;

Where Raphael and all his great compeers
Art's form divine in giant-mould have cast,
The very air is heavy with the years,
The very stones are vocal of the past.

Still, as we saunter down the crowded street,
On our own thoughts intent, and plans, and pleasures,
For miles and miles, beneath our idle feet
Rome buries from the day yet unknown treasures.

The whole world's alphabet, in every line
Some stirring page of history she recalls:
Her Alpha is the Prison Mamertine,
Her Omega, St. Paul's without the Walls.

Above, beneath, around, she weaves her spells,
And priest and poet vulgarise in vain:
Who once within her fascination dwells,
Leaves her with but one thought—to come again.

So cast thine obol into Trevi's fountain—
Drink of its waters—and, returning home,
Pray that by land or sea, by lake or mountain,
"All roads alike may lead at last to Rome."

H. C. MERIVALE.

Easter, 1869.

The Uses of Fools.

Mr. Galton, in his very ingenious book on *Hereditary Genius*, endeavours to calculate the proportion between the number of fools and the number of men of genius living at a given time. If I remember rightly, he comes to the conclusion that there is about one man of genius in a population of a million. Any one who should try to count thirty men of indisputable genius living at this time in the British Islands will probably think that the scarcity is not over-estimated. It is true, however, as Mr. Galton says, that glibly as we are accustomed to talk about millions (especially if we are directors of Limited Liability companies), we seldom realize the meaning of our words. To form a more distinct picture in our minds, let us imagine ourselves to take a walk, after the manner of Diogenes, through this great city, looking for a man, not of honesty, but of genius. By the time we had gone from Hammersmith to Woolwich, and from Hampstead to Camberwell, penetrated every court, and searched every house from garret to cellar—not even omitting the Houses of Parliament —our labours would have been rewarded by the discovery of three such men as we desire. The facts become still more startling when we endeavour to represent clearly the difference between the intellects of a genius and a fool. Mr. Galton quotes the results of certain Cambridge examinations, from which it would appear that a senior wrangler gets several thousand marks, when the luckless "wooden spoon" receives a hundred; and this difference, according to the examiners, is an inadequate representation of the real difference in ability. Thus, if we translate intellectual into physical force, the man of genius would resemble Gulliver in Lilliput—able to take our whole fleet in tow, ironclads and all, whilst the poor crawling mortal of ordinary dimensions would be scarcely able to move one of its cockboats. I have sometimes seen in old books pictures of certain traditionary giants drawn to scale by the side of men of average stature. Goliah was a mere dwarf by comparison with some of these imaginary persons, who were, perhaps, constructed from the fossil remains of whales or elephants; yet the diagrams would be no more than a fair representation of intellectual inequalities. If the mental corresponded to the physical stature, London would, in this case, be inhabited by millions of pigmies—little creatures able to slink through keyholes and creep underneath doors—whilst there would be three towering monsters about the height and bulk of the Victoria Tower. Extravagant as it may seem, there is something to be said for this view of the facts. Compare, for example, the influence exercised upon all future generations by some giant of intellect—an Aristotle or a Mahomet

—with that of the unknown philosophers and prophets who, in their own time, failed to recognize any great difference between themselves and the immortals with whom they rubbed shoulders. Is not the difference as great as between the Coliseum, which stands as a memorial to all ages, and the contemporary cottage which has mouldered away centuries ago into unregarded dust?

I do not mean, however, to inquire into the accuracy of the statement. I am content to assume that it does not contain an entirely fancy picture of the facts. Let us suppose it to be some approximation to the truth, and then let our imagination sink appalled before the vast number of fools in this world, created doubtless for some wise and sufficient purpose. We generally affect to despise fools; yet surely they must have their uses, for they swarm around us thick as those countless germs which, according to Professor Tyndall's pleasant discovery, are entering our nostrils at every breath we draw. For my part, I am disposed to think with awe of the vast masses of folly stored up in this limited planet, and to speculate occasionally upon the advantages of the arrangement. First, however, let us recognize the obvious inconveniences which everybody must remark when the thought first occurs to him. The extreme value of high intellect is obvious from its remarkable rarity; and Mr. Galton, if I understand him rightly, thinks that we should be as thoughtful in raising these prize specimens of humanity as we are in producing perfect racehorses and gigantic pigs. It often occurs to us to depreciate the services performed by men of genius. They make great discoveries; but no discovery is ever made for the glory of which there do not immediately arise two or three plausible competitors. Newton obtained a higher reputation than any human being has ever done in a similar career by unravelling the laws of gravitation. But if Newton had not solved the problem somebody else would have solved it soon afterwards. Dim glimpses of the truth had been caught by numerous observers; and the tools were being daily perfected which brought the task within reach of inferior intellects. The glory might have fallen to the share of another philosopher, or might have been divided amongst several seekers after the truth; but, in another generation or two, the same knowledge would have been attained, and therefore the world at large could have dispensed pretty well with Newton. If this be true, it is equally true that a whole wilderness of such young gentlemen as are annually plucked for their degrees would never have done the work; and that we cannot make a man of genius out of two, nor out of two million, fools. When a great step has to be taken in advance a dozen short-legged people are just as helpless as one. We cannot pierce the depths of space by substituting any quantity of ordinary spectacles for a single first-rate telescope. And thus the fact, that we can dispense with any given man of genius by no means proves that we can dispense with all. The first who comes will unlock the door for us, and will have the good fortune to gain all the credit of the blessings to which we are admitted;

but we must wait till he comes, and be duly thankful for his arrival. Genius, in short, is a treasure of inestimable value; though geniuses, like humbler people, depend in great part for a recognition of their work upon the fortunate combination of circumstances which enables them to employ their powers to advantage.

In proportion to the value of genius is the enormous mischief done by its opposite. Stupidity is the great curse against which all reformers have to fight. It is melancholy to think how vast a proportion of the energy expended in making this benighted world a little more habitable goes in the establishment of truths with which everybody is supposed to be acquainted, and the assault of evils which have been given up as untenable by every reasoning being. What is the use, one is sometimes tempted to say in despair, of throwing logic before vestrymen, and showing, for the millionth time, that two and two make four? Explain to the ordinary mind by the clearest possible arguments, and by appeal to the most notorious facts, that all men are mortal, and that Socrates is a man; and invite him to draw the conclusion that Socrates is mortal. He will laugh in your face with the utmost good temper, and declare that he does not see the force of your arguments. Metaphysicians, I know, cherish the belief that it is impossible for a man to believe that A is B, and that A is not B, at the same time. That only shows the danger of arguing from theory instead of observation. Nothing is more common than to find a man resting with the most absolute complacency in the belief of two propositions which are mutually contradictory. The natural result is that human progress is, for the most part, effected by a series of blunders. We carry out, on a great scale, the ingenious theory of education, which rests upon the proposition that a burnt child dreads the fire. It follows that if you let your children put their fingers into the fire a sufficient number of times, they will end by being more careful of those which remain. Or it may be said that we are like a tribe finding their way across an intricate wilderness without a map or compass. We blunder into every track that presents itself, and only give it up when we find, by practical experience, that it does not lead us in the desired direction. Gradually, it may be, we advance, but we waste infinite time and pains in struggling through difficult and devious routes, against which a little forethought might have sufficiently warned us. We went on burning people for holding different opinions from ourselves about matters which neither of us understood, till we found that burning was practically a defective mode of argument. We hanged pickpockets, till it appeared that it rather encouraged the practice than otherwise. We bullied our colonies in order to preserve a spirit of loyalty, till we had thoroughly alienated the most valuable part of our possessions. We still pay people to beg, under the impression that it is a plan admirably calculated to encourage a spirit of independence. History is supposed to be an elevating study, and certainly it is pleasant to find that in some respects our forefathers were greater fools than ourselves; but it is also melancholy to see how many blunders

and crimes were committed in defiance of the clearest warnings from a few wise men, and yet more melancholy to see how often the wisest of men pursued a line of policy calculated to produce results diametrically opposite to those which they anticipated. It is generally seen that the avowed motives of the rulers of mankind were often different from those by which they were really actuated, and that these last, again, had generally little real relation to the results which they were, in fact, working out. But, not to go too deeply into such speculations, it is plain enough that the huge deadweight of placid stupidity is the heaviest of all the burdens which reformers have to move. Make the lowest strata of the population one degree more intelligent and prudent, enable them to realize the simple fact that there is a to-morrow as well as a to-day, and you would do more to improve them than by all the charitable schemes in existence. Give, to those a little above them, some glimpse of the most obvious results of modern thought, and you would clear away such masses of imbecile prejudice as would admit an unprecedented burst of daylight into the dark places of the world. If we only understood roughly what we were about, we should save some of that dreary application of the rule of thumb, that patching and botching and tinkering which wastes so much invaluable time and energy. And there is enough stupidity in existence to thicken the very atmosphere.

Yet—for I must return to this reflection—there must be some use in a material so widely disseminated. There must be deaths, or, as Mr. Weller profoundly inquired, what would become of the undertakers? Pursuing the same frame of thought, we may remark that there must be fools, or what would become of the ———— ? I leave a blank, which every one may fill up at his pleasure. No one will find a difficulty in discovering a class specially fitted, in his opinion, to prey upon the simpler classes of the community. According to his taste, he may insert any of the learned professions, lawyers, doctors, or even clergymen; railway companies, newspaper proprietors, members of Parliament, shopkeepers, pickpockets, and others, all of whom, though they may not subsist exclusively upon the folly of their neighbours, have, like the old oilmen, more or less of a vested interest in the existing state of darkness. But such an inquiry, like most other inquiries into final causes, would soon land us in inscrutable mysteries. Why we are not as wise as Socrates is as inscrutable as the opposite question—Why we are not all as stupid as baboons? All we can do with our limited intellects is to trace out, in all humility, some of the functions discharged by fools; just as we might investigate the uses of oxygen, without presumptuously inquiring whether our lungs might not have been contrived so as to enable us to dispense with its assistance. We are like children on the shores of the vast ocean of stupidity, noticing its ebb and flow, and dimly conjecturing that it must be an essential part of the economy of the world. A great writer has written the praises of folly in enduring satire; but it is to be feared that he was not quite serious, and I shall not presume to follow in his footsteps.

I will take one or two of the most obvious branches of the subject, and point out how much we owe in some respects to the dulness of the greater part of human beings.

Talleyrand, or Dr. Johnson, or Voltaire, or some other sponsor of unappropriated good things, has said something which I cannot accurately quote about the charms of thoroughly stupid society. There is a pleasure, after a day of intellectual labour, in coming home to talk of oxen. Half-a-dozen clever men, when they get together, almost inevitably begin to aim at brilliant conversation; and brilliant conversation, as a general rule, is exceedingly tiresome. We sometimes lament the loss of the art, and wish that we could have heard Johnson and Burke calling out each other's powers. The wish is natural enough; yet I have little doubt that if any conversation was written down precisely as it was spoken, and not as it ought to have been spoken, it would be scarcely possible to read it. The successful hits have come down to us, whilst the failures have perished; and we rashly infer that the surviving gains are a fair sample of the average staple. The inference is surely wrong. Boswell is always sneering at Goldsmith for his efforts to cut in and shine in the conversation, and laughs at the blunders which ensued when he happened to succeed. Goldsmith's biographers have been very indignant, and have tried to prove that he was really brilliant—as though they knew better than those who had talked to him over a hundred dinner-tables. The true line of defence, it seems to me, would be different. I should admit that Goldsmith's talk was silly and blundering and claim it as a merit. Who does not sympathize with the efforts of a sociable man to break down a monopoly of talk, and still more with the desire to substitute a little wholesome nonsense for sententious epigrams and ponderous witticisms? I have, I confess, a weakness for Johnson which rather struggles against my convictions; but I have a strong impression that Goldsmith's blundering was a pleasant relief even to the great doctor's vigorous hard-hitting; and still more decidedly that it was better than nine-tenths of the talk which generally affects to be brilliant. The old conversational excellence is decayed, partly, I imagine, because we have no longer those small societies in which there was perfect ease, and in which every man's intimate knowledge of his neighbours' weaknesses led to much sharper and closer fencing than is often practicable in a mixed assembly; but partly, too, because we have grown wise enough to know that the value of social meetings depends upon perfect relaxation of mind and the absence of any effort to sparkle and astonish. Jaques showed his deep worldly wisdom in nothing more than his intense appreciation of a fool. The pleasure with which he sucked in the platitudes of Touchstone should be an example for us; it shows how an active mind, condemned to be always speculating and drawing food for melancholy out of every object it meets, may repose upon the vacuous talk of an empty mind as upon a pillow. Fools supply the narcotic element of society; they may be compared to Keats's nightingale; when we hear them—

> A drowsy numbness pains
> Our sense, as though of hemlock we had drunk,
> Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
> One minute past and Lethe-wards had sunk—

always understanding that "pains" is inserted partly for the sake of the rhyme, and that we should substitute some such word as "soothes." And, certainly, we may add,—

> Thou wast not born for death, immortal "fool;"
> No hungry generations tread thee down:
> The voice we hear this passing night was heard
> In ancient days by emperor and clown.

But I should apologize for parodying the most exquisite poetry in the language. I only mean to urge that good stupid homely talk is often the most agreeable, and that we have all listened with the utmost pleasure to foolish gossip about trifles, when lofty philosophy, however animating in its place, would pall upon our palates. Of all the wearying talk to which I have ever listened, the most wearying has been that of very clever men with a reputation for conversational ability. There are people who, if they are wanted to take a walk, insist upon turning it into a race; and they are not the pleasantest of companions.

This example, trivial enough in itself, may serve to suggest one of the inestimable blessings of stupidity. Society without fools would be like a plum-pudding without flour—something too strong for human digestion. We should be at each other's throats in a day. Let us suppose, for example—for any hypothesis is allowable in argument—that men were reasoning beings. When anybody laid down a new doctrine we should be able to trace out its logical consequences and see distinctly whither it was tending. We should, in all probability, be still burning every one who disagreed with us. For what is the real philosophy of persecution? It is not really, or it is not chiefly, that we are anxious to force other people to keep to the truth. A lofty and unselfish mind is capable of such an anxiety, but the great majority of mankind possess minds to which neither of those two epithets can be plausibly applied. The more common and powerful motive is our strong desire to persuade ourselves of the truth of our own opinions. When you have burnt a man for holding a particular tenet it is obvious that he must have been in the wrong, or you would have committed a wicked action—a conclusion too absurd to be entertained for a moment. It is said to be a principle of human nature that we hate those whom we have injured. The statement is one which I should be slow to believe, for it implies a large amount of malevolence. But it may safely be said that we regard people whom we have injured with a complacent sense of our own justice and their imbecility; and the policy of persecution is so far intelligible if not precisely virtuous. Assuming then, that we persecute chiefly to strengthen our own convictions, it is fortunate that our sharpsightedness does not keep pace with our selfishness. If

we burnt people for their own good, as we generally affect to do, we should keep our eye upon errors of all kinds; as we burn them chiefly for our own, we wait until their perverse disposition to go wrong, that is, to disagree with our views, leads them to confront directly or unmistakeably upon some pet doctrine of our own. A man may be working away at some remote corner of inquiry, turning up unexpected results and reversing all the established modes of thought, and we remain sublimely unconscious that so obscure a branch of knowledge can possibly have any bearing upon our own position. Yet it is daily more obvious that there is a close connection between all conceivable subjects of human thought, and that a quiet philosopher who is looking at insects through a microscope or mixing queer-named compounds in a crucible, may be really pulling out the corner-stone of established systems of politics or theology. If we had only known in time how much trouble early physical inquirers were bringing into the world, how many controversies they were introducing, what a biting acid they were pouring upon the consolidated doctrines of ages, we should have sprung upon them and strangled them in their birth. People hold up their hands in horror at the thought that Galileo should have been imprisoned for asserting the motion of the earth. Doubtless it was wrong; but what amazes me is rather the moderation than the vigour of the persecution. If only his judges had caught some dim glimpse of the harvest that was to spring from that little seed of heresy, of the tremendous explosion that would follow when the spark had fairly set fire to the train, they would have trampled it out more carefully than we should try to check the spread of the most deadly contagion. They would have felt themselves in the position of that princess in the *Arabian Nights* who fought the deadly battle with the magician; if she let one seed of the pomegranate escape her notice, she might triumph for a time, but her doom was sealed. Fortunately we are not so quick at seeing consequences. We allow the decisive battle to be fought without interference, because we do not understand that it really settles who is to gain the key of the position. The further we see into the consequences which may be drawn from an argument, the more eager we are to meet the evil at its commencement. For this reason, I sometimes fancy that the most intolerant of all people at the present moment are the scientific men, who, on their own principles, should be most open to conviction. An unfortunate gentleman, some years ago, put forward an heretical proposition as to the movement of the moon round the earth; it was simply, as I imagine, due to a common confusion of ideas, and should have been answered by referring him to an elementary treatise of astronomy. But the wrath which he excited was as though he had risen up at Rome and denounced the authority of the Pope and the Council, or as though he had advocated Fenianism in the House of Commons, or told the St. Pancras guardians that their medical officer was an honest man. *The Times* was filled with passionate assertions of the true faith and pathetic expostulations with our erring brother. A sort of holy

horror seized all orthodox men of science at the bare thought of the presumption implied. Let any one who has the proper martyr temperament try the effect of making questionable statements about the shape of a monkey's brain, or declare that glacier movement is due to some other cause different from that generally assigned, and he will see how vigorous a flame of wrath can burn in scientific breasts. Of course the rage blazes most fiercely when complicated with a dash of the *odium theologicum;* but it often amazes an outsider that people should wax so warm about questions which they know must ultimately be decided by cool reasoning. One cause of this vehemence is that scientific men are accustomed to logical methods, and that you cannot touch any remote outwork of their doctrines without sending a shock to the very centre of the system. Be heretical on the most trifling inference from mathematical investigations, and it is at once evident that you must come into conflict with the fundamental axioms on which the whole science reposes. There is a perfect solidarity between all the doctrines thus bound together, and a touch upon the remotest fibre of the web is immediately propagated to the centre. Luckily the very reverse is full of more exciting topics. We are tolerant because we are stupid. We allow the enemy to open some remote back-door because it is so very small, and do not see that we have admitted him as effectually as though we had flung the main gates wide open: and thus superstitions can be safely attacked from behind, which, if boldly encountered at once, would fall upon the assailant and crush him to dust.

Our stupidity, in short, preserves a convenient twilight; it hangs like a fog over contending armies, which enables the rival commanders to shift their positions, and gradually to occupy important posts without giving the alarm. Huge platitudes grow and flourish beneath its fostering influences, under cover of which almost any manœuvres may be safely effected. A new opinion disguised under a good sounding truism will often escape detection, and gradually work its way into general acceptance. Before we are aware that any change has been made we have undergone a complete revolution, and wonder, when we look back, like a man who has been walking in a mist and has described a complete circle under the impression that he was following a straight line. But this service, great as it is, is only one of those which we owe to stupidity. It is generally said, and with a certain degree of truth, that men are great in proportion as they are in advance of their age, and catch distinct glimpses of the goal to which things are tending. But it is also to be observed that fools are frequently in advance of their age, and that the fools often make the best reformers of the two. Great thinkers have for the most part the weakness that they can see two sides of a question; they see that a change will lead to certain blessings; but they cannot overlook the evils with which those blessings will be inevitably accompanied. They hesitate and draw back; their native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought; and they are apt to be trimmers, and to

fill the ranks of the moderate party, which in all revolutionary changes is certain to go to the wall. Their course may be the wisest, but it has the disadvantage of being impracticable. Now a good thick-headed, one-idea'd fool is on such occasions of inestimable value. We are accustomed to boast that as a nation we don't know when we are beaten; taken literally that amounts like many other national self-glorifications to boasting of stupidity, and, if the facts be true, it is a very legitimate boast. The Duke of Wellington, who is supposed to have profited by this quality, is in some respects an excellent example of the principle. He was not precisely stupid, but no man, who can fairly be called great, ever had a narrower escape from stupidity. With certain great talents, he had one characteristic peculiarity of fools—that of being provided with a pair of natural blinkers, which compelled him to see only that which was straight before him, and to take the narrowest possible view of his task. The stupidest of men could hardly have been more blind to the real nature of the vast revolution in regard to which he played so conspicuous a part. If we turn to the more humble class of modern reformers we may find more apposite illustrations. As a general rule the thoroughbred reformer may be known by two or three peculiarities. He is absolutely blind to all the charms of venerable antiquity and old association; he looks upon any obstacle which opposes his path as an American backwoodsman looks upon a tree; it is simply an encumbrance to be removed from the face of the earth. He naturally regards all people who have some lingering attachment to beliefs as institutions sanctioned by long prescriptions, as a deaf man regards a musician; they have a sense of which he knows nothing, and for which he cares as little. He has got hold somehow or other of a single idea, good, bad, or indifferent, and is profoundly convinced that its adoption by mankind is the one thing necessary to bring about the millennium. One crotchet does as well as another when it is thoroughly fixed into his brain; for his intellect is of the kind which receives one impression strongly, and is ever afterwards inaccessible to others. Whether the salvation of the human race is to depend in his opinion upon an improved system of drainage, or a total revolution in their religion, is a matter of chance; but having once selected his line of action nothing can turn him aside. The reformer of this type is merely one variety of the vast family of bores; and bores may be shortly described as people who get their own way. Men of poetical sensibility are shocked at the prosaic turn of his mind; they cannot put up with a man who regards every conceivable topic simply in its bearings, say, upon sewerage; who knows not what it is to be weary himself, and is sublimely unconscious of wearying others; and who is content to lead a life like that of a miner, who should always be hammering at one narrow subterranean gallery, never turning to the right hand or the left, and never visited or distracted by the light of heaven. The prevalence of this type gives a certain repulsive character to many sects of reformers; one is perfectly amazed at the narrowness of their views, and the pachydermatous

character of their minds: but one gives way to them in time. They represent force if not light; and one thing more may be said in their behalf. They are generally so dull that their efforts effect little unless they hit upon a really weak place. They are an admirable forlorn hope; they do the preliminary battering which, perhaps, makes a breach for the assault of more cultivated minds; but they require to be backed by men of greater weight to possess much real importance. According to the proverb we should not use razors to cut blocks; fools of this variety may be regarded as the coarser tools which do the rough preliminary work for blades of higher temper. I will not say that all martyrs are fools—for nothing could be further from the truth; but fools are admirable stuff of which to make martyrs, and it is a pity when more valuable material is sacrificed. One of the most unselfish heroes of modern times, who possessed in a high degree this capacity for absorption in one idea, said (and few nobler sayings are authentically recorded) that he was worth inconceivably more for hanging than for any other purpose. It was perfectly true; only that one would be glad if the hanging could always fall to the lot of the stupid. If we could catalogue the men who have done the greatest services to mankind we should find amongst them no inconsiderable number of stupid heroes, whose very stupidity has qualified them to act as the *âmes damnées* of wiser and therefore less simple-minded men. It is a touching reflection that some people sacrifice not only their lives but their intelligence, and become stupid, pig-headed, tiresome, unimaginative bores for the benefit of their fellow-mortals. Remembering that we should often regard a fool as the Eastern nations regard an idiot, as a being whose dull preceptions and slow intellect are the indication of his having been set apart by Providence for working out blessings to his kind, we should value him for his capacities, but take very good care that, so far as in us lies, he shall be devoted to his proper sphere of duty. The great author of the *Praises of Folly* was a far cleverer man than the stupid monks who insisted upon protesting against the grievances of their day at all hazards and without regard to consequences. But the talents of Erasmus would have been of little use without the pig-headed determination of men of the Luther stamp.

We owe an almost equal gratitude to that opposite kind of stupidity which leads to simple Conservatism. According to Mr. Mill most stupid people are Tories, and the Tories, he added, should be proud of possessing so great a social force. There are, indeed, two kinds of genuine Conservatism. There is the man who sees that the creeds of his day are hollow and doomed to decay, but shrinks from abandoning them on that account. He feels that his temples are gradually becoming empty of worshippers, and incapable of retaining the reverence of mankind; but then he does not like the notion of admitting the rough brutal mob to break them down, and defile the sacred places with their coarse ribaldry. He is content to postpone the deluge which he knows must come in time, and is satisfied to be an unbeliever in secret, without promulgating his creed

from the housetops. The temper was very common in the age preceding the French Revolution; and many men of ability, who did not share the enthusiasm which alone gave life to the old forms of society, were nevertheless anxious to retain them as a practically convenient arrangement. There is much to be said on behalf of this view by all who dread the evils of sudden revolution. But if it were not for the genuine stupidity which continues to believe in what is demonstrably false, the policy indicated would be simply impracticable. There is, fortunately, a great mass of thick-headed honest people, who hold in good faith the positions only maintained by the intelligent for strategical purposes. They supply the backbone of genuine enthusiasm which is necessary to hold any party together across any severe tests; and, consequently, it becomes possible for a revolution to be brought about gradually, instead of necessarily involving a sudden and complete catastrophe. Political and social creeds may continue to exercise a lively influence upon mankind, and to supply the practical requirements of good order and morality until something better has grown up in their place, and till, so to speak, they have been pushed off the branch by the new growth, instead of giving way abruptly as soon as things begin to wither at the root. Progress may be made by gradual development, instead of by a series of jerks and dislocations. But if we were all quick enough to jump at once from premises to conclusions, we should never be safe from the most violent changes. The stupid part of mankind necessarily forms the large majority of every party, though by a natural attraction it will be chiefly on the side of obstruction. Thus it discharges the inestimable function of giving reality and vigour to a policy which without it would too often result in a mere sham fight and a feeble attempt to cover an inevitable retreat.

One other application of the same principle may be suggested. How could society hold together at all, if the great mass were not comparatively stupid? Would people be patient enough to put up with the accumulated misery all around us, if their perceptions were not sufficiently dull to reconcile them to the atmosphere in which they live? Discontent is a highly desirable thing, because without discontent we should have no improvement; but discontent beyond a certain pitch means a general appeal to force and a revolt against all established order. It is, perhaps, well for us all, and especially for those who are comfortable, that stupidity acts as a narcotic, and we may always rely with confidence upon finding any quantities required.

I have ventured thus to sketch shortly some of the uses of fools—employing that word in a tolerably comprehensive sense. Unluckily, "fool" has become a term of abuse, which is rather hard, considering that it includes so large a proportion of the human race. For we have this great satisfaction that so far as the national welfare depends upon our stores of stupidity, there is not the least danger of the supply falling short. I know that great efforts are being made to diminish it. Everybody is to be educated, and all appointments are to be gained by

competitive examination. If this latter proposal be carried out, we shall be in danger of hearing the cry, What is to become of the fools? Is there not some risk, it will be said, in condemning so wide a class to perpetual exclusion from all the honours which the nation has to bestow? We may be thoroughly at ease. I have known many men win high honours in competitive examinations who have come as nearly as may be to satisfying in every possible respect the definition of a fool pure and simple. And with regard to education, the alarm would be still more needless. If every child in the country received the education that is now given at our public schools and universities—a consummation which, moderate as it is, must, I fear, be far distant—he or she might still remain as great a fool as ever. Folly does not consist in being unable to read and write, but in a certain innate quality which no human skill can eradicate; and I will venture to say that as fine specimens of the quality may be found in the upper ranks as in any class of society. Now, if we succeed, as it is devoutly to be hoped we may, in raising the general level of intelligence, would matters be materially altered? We should all be moved up a few degrees in the scale; but the difference between highest and lowest would probably be increased. A general rise of the standard would stimulate the ablest men even more than the stupidest; to say nothing of the fact, which must be soon acknowledged, that there is even more room for improvement in the higher than in the lower branches of education. The essential fact is that there will always remain a huge mass of sheer stupidity to act as a ballast to society, to deaden sudden changes, and to prevent brilliant innovators from carrying out their schemes too hastily. If we were half as certain of preserving our coal as our stupidity we need have no anxiety about the payment of the national debt.

A CYNIC.

Fog-Signals.

In this land of fogs and mists, where, if foreigners are to be believed, we only see the sun exceptionally, and have often to feel our way about London streets in mid-day, it is necessary to make some provision against the inconveniences that might arise from such an interference with our normal visual faculties. It is true we have not yet hit upon any contrivance for preventing collision of cabs in Cornhill, or for guiding timid women across the great pathless expanse south of Trafalgar Square, on a thick November morning; but perhaps we shall come to that some day. Meanwhile, at any rate, we are taking steps in advance, inasmuch as we have succeeded in diminishing the dangers with which our insular fogs menace some other kinds of locomotion.

In railway-travelling, for example, although the trains cannot, like carriages on common roads, stray away from their allotted line, and so invite external dangers, yet they have to be guarded against obstacles on their own track. This, as our readers know, is effected by the admirable systems of signals—semaphore arms by day, and white, green, or red lights by night—which either declare to the ever observant driver that his line is "clear," or advise him to go forward with "caution," or command him peremptorily to stop at once, as "danger" lies immediately before him. But as these signals must, to be efficacious, be seen some distance before the driver arrives at them, their utility depends entirely on the clearness of the atmosphere: in a fog they are of no value at all. But trains must go on in thick weather as in clear, or the traffic of the country would come to a dead lock; and hence it has been found necessary, when the visual power is impeded, to invent modes of appealing to another sense—that of *hearing*. As the noise made by the train is considerable, the signal must be powerful to be heard by the driver; no shouting, or bells, or anything of that *timbre*, would be of use; it must be something much more resonant. The steam-whistle is effective enough as a signal from the train to the road, but as a signal from the road to the train this is, of course, not available. We once saw, on a Belgian railway, an air-whistle, *i.e.* a whistle like those on the locomotives, but blown by air, which a man on the line compressed with a portable pump; but this, we suppose, did not answer; as it has never been adopted elsewhere. Some years ago, however, an engineer contrived a fog railway-signal acting by explosion, and this has now come into general use. It is a small circular tin box, about the size of a crown-piece, but thicker, soldered up tight, and containing a fulminating composition that will ignite on violent pressure. The box has two flexible lead lappets, by which it can be fastened on the top of the rail when a train is approaching. As

the engine-wheel passes over it, the pressure fires the composition, and the force of the explosion bursts open the box with a loud report, like that of a cannon, which the driver cannot fail to hear. One such signal calls his attention; two tell him to go cautiously; and three order him to stop.

These signals may often be heard in thick weather on the railways near London; and in some cases, particularly on the South Eastern between Charing Cross, Cannon Street, and London Bridge, where the continual crossing by the trains of each other's paths renders the signalling of vital importance, files of men are employed in addition, at short distances apart, to keep up a constant communication with the drivers. It is marvellous to our minds, considering the complexity of these arrangements, that so large a traffic has been conducted so safely.

But the mists incident to our climate extend, not only over the land, but over our rivers and seas, and especially near our coasts; and the problem has been one of great importance how to protect our navigation. Fogs are dangerous to this in two ways, first by leading to collisions, and secondly by rendering it difficult for vessels to keep clear of the land, or to find out where they are.

Collisions are much to be dreaded in much-frequented waters, as in many parts of the Channel, and in the entrances and fairway channels of our great rivers. In clear weather the "rule of the road" by day, and a well-considered system of lights by night, are, or ought to be, sufficient to ensure safety; but in thick weather of course both these are useless, and either the greatest caution must be exercised, or the organs of hearing must be again appealed to.* Steamers are generally provided for this purpose with steam-whistles, like locomotives, to proclaim their whereabouts, but sailing-vessels are confined to speaking-trumpets, or bells, or guns.

The other form of the navigation problem, namely, how in foggy weather to convey to a ship navigating near a coast an intimation whereabouts she is, has long engaged anxious attention. If the atmosphere were always clear, the admirable system of lighthouses and light-vessels established all round the coasts of our island would render the darkness of the blackest night no obstacle to a ship's finding her safe path, clear of headlands and shoals, with the same certainty as in broad day; but in fogs and mists the lights, though of the brightest character, are of very limited use, as even the electric ray has but small power to pierce through the dense semi-opaque vapour of which a thick fog is usually composed, and in such a case, before a ship could get near enough to see the light, she would probably be in great danger.

Here again, therefore, the idea of an audible signal occurs naturally, and seamen have long asked whether something could not be put upon prominent headlands and shoals, which might be heard by them in fogs at such a distance off as to warn them of their situation? The

* While this passage is going through the press, a most lamentable comment on it is furnished by the destruction, on the 17th March, by collision near the Needles, in a dense fog, of the passenger steamer *Normandy*, with the loss of thirty-four lives.

authorities of the Trinity House, who have charge of the lighthouse arrangements of the kingdom, have long had this question under their consideration, and have made many attempts to solve the problem. In some places there is a curious natural provision for fog-warning, in the fact that the spots in question, generally islands, are the habitation of large numbers of sea-birds, which make a noise that can be heard far away. The South Stack, near Holyhead, is a well-known example; and in these places the birds are generally preserved and fostered as benefactors to mankind. But such cases are rare, and artificial expedients have to be resorted to. Bells have been tried—we all know the story of the Inchcape Bell, and have heard of the Bell Rock, on the Scotch coast; and every yachtsman has passed the Bell Buoy at the entrance of Southampton Water—but the sound of both bells and gongs has been found to be so damped by fog as to be heard only a short distance away. Guns are troublesome and not always suitable; and there has been, until lately, much difficulty in finding anything that would do. A short time ago, however, an invention by an American, Mr. Daboll, was brought to the notice of the Trinity House authorities; and, as it appeared promising, it was tried, with so good a result, that it may probably come more extensively into use as a fog-signal. We have been allowed, by the courtesy of the authorities, an inspection of the apparatus, and will endeavour to explain its construction and action to our readers.

It is a very powerful horn or trumpet, blown by highly compressed air; the sound being produced, however, not on the principle of either of these instruments as ordinarily used in military bands, but on that of the clarionet or the brilliant trumpet-pipes of an organ.

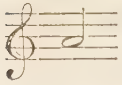
The sound of a clarionet is due to the vibration of what is called a *reed—i. e.* a thin tongue of elastic material, which is placed so as to cover a long opening or slit leading into the pipe of the instrument. The reed is fixed at one end, the part over the opening being left free to vibrate. When the player covers the reed with his mouth and attempts to blow into the tube, the reed, by its flexibility and elasticity, alternately closes the opening and leaves it again, allowing a jet of air to enter the tube every time the opening is free. By this action the reed is set into quick vibration; and the puffs of entering air, following each other in regular succession, and with great rapidity, give rise, on well-known acoustical principles, to a musical tone. This tone is further modified in quality by reverberation in the tube of the instrument, and is greatly strengthened by the bell-shape given to its extremity.

The pipes of what are called the *reed-stops* of an organ are on the same principle as the clarionet; but the vibrating reed is in this case a thin plate of brass, varying in size according to the pitch of the note, but, for the middle tones, an inch or two long, a quarter to half an inch wide, and the substance of a thin card. The mouth of the player is represented by a box, enclosing the whole of the reed apparatus; and the pipe is generally of metal, conical in shape, or with a bell-mouth, some inches in diameter.

The fog-horn is essentially of the same construction as the reed-pipe of an organ, but with all its parts magnified to colossal dimensions. The reed, instead of being a thin leaf of brass, is a thick plate of hard steel, five inches long, two inches wide, and a quarter of an inch thick at the root, tapering down to an eighth of an inch at the loose end. The tube is of brass, eight or ten feet long, gradually expanding in diameter till it finishes in a bell-mouth two feet across. The pipe is placed vertically, its upper part projecting through the roof of the building, and being bent into an elbow, so as to make the bell part horizontal, delivering its sound straight out to sea.

The compressed air for sounding the horn is supplied from a reservoir, into which it is forced by pumps worked with mechanical power. In the experimental apparatus a hot-air engine, of American contrivance, is used for the purpose; but a small steam-engine would probably be a more simple and trustworthy machine. A duplicate engine is required in case of any part getting out of order.

The pressure of air required to sound the pipe is on the same magnified scale as the pipe itself: in an organ, it amounts only to an ounce or two on every square inch; for a fog-horn it is from five to ten pounds, and the quantity of air required at this pressure is very large. It is difficult to believe that any force of mere air would be sufficient to set in vibration the huge blade of steel, as strong and as stiff as a large carpenter's chisel, forming the reed, but there is no doubt of the fact. We can even tell the rate of vibration; for as the note sounded by the horn is somewhere near



we know that the reed must have about four hundred vibrations to and fro per second, this being about the velocity necessary to produce the note in question.

The experimental fog-horn we have described is erected in a small building close to the lighthouse at St. Catherine's, on the extreme southern point of the Isle of Wight; and as this headland projects well out into the English Channel, it is necessary to extend the signals over the whole southern semicircle of sea, from east to west. To enable the horn to cover this large extent of arc, it is made to revolve slowly with a reciprocating motion, so as to present its bell successively in all directions, and to deliver its tone to all the southern points of the compass. The sound is not continuous, but interrupted, at intervals, like a revolving light; at present it sounds for about seven seconds and is silent eighteen, but these times can be altered at pleasure. The revolution of the horn, and the duration and intervals of the notes, are regulated by machinery actuated by the prime mover.

The two accompanying sketches will illustrate the general construction of the fog-horn.

Fig. 1 is a general view. A is the body or tube of the horn, showing its bell-shaped extremity, passing above the roof of the building and bent down at right angles, so as to throw its tone horizontally out to sea.

B is the box containing the reed, of which a larger detailed view is given in *Fig.* 2.

Fig. 1.

General View of the Fog-Horn.

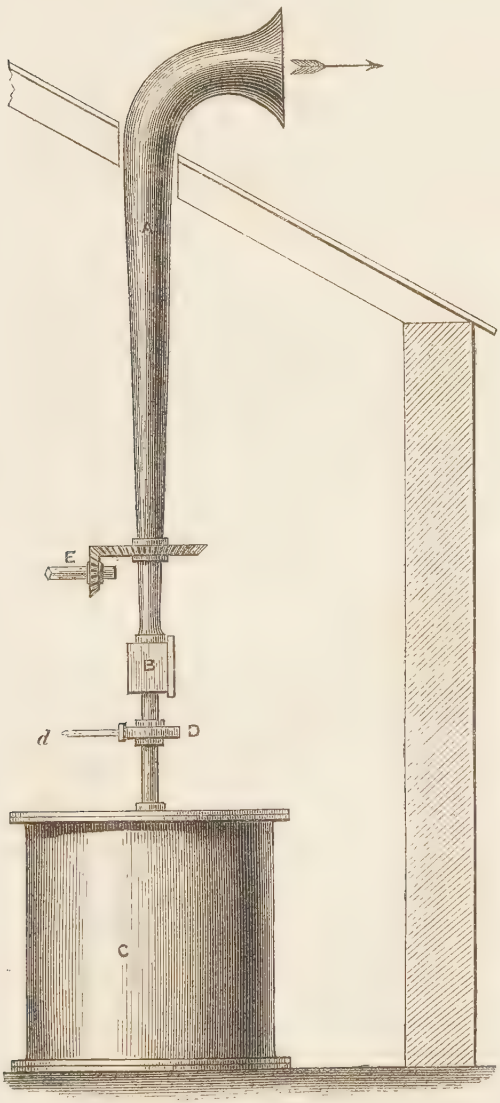
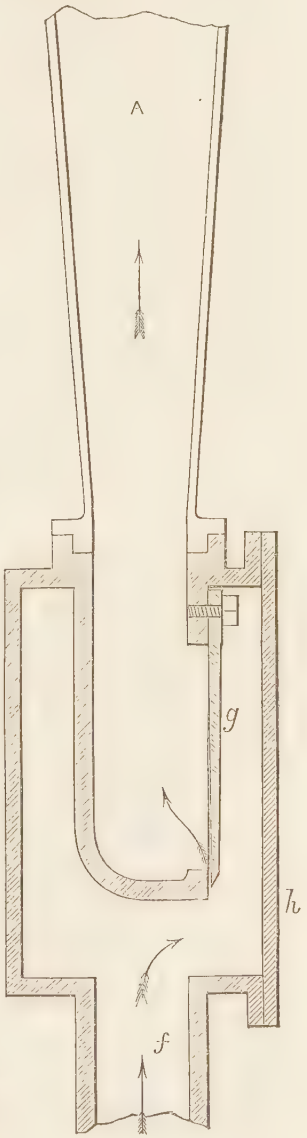


Fig. 2.

Enlarged Section of the Reed-Box.



C is the reservoir, into which compressed air is supplied by a forcing-pump and engine not shown in the figure.

D is a valve by which the air is alternately admitted to and shut off from the horn, so as to produce the intermitting sounds analogous to the "flashes" of a revolving light. The valve-rod *d* is worked by the engine, so as to give regularly-timed intervals.

E is the machinery by which the horn is caused to revolve, so as to present its bell successively to every point of the compass within its range.

Fig. 2 is a longitudinal section of the reed-box, showing its internal construction on a larger scale.

A is the body or tube of the horn; *f*, the pipe conveying the compressed air from the reservoir and valve below. *g* is the steel reed, fastened to the tube at its upper extremity by a screw, the lower part being left free to vibrate. The direction of the passage of the air is shown by the arrows.

h is a cover, by removing which, access can be obtained to the reed when desired.

This and another fog-signal (we believe the invention of an Englishman and worked by steam) were exhibited at the Paris *Exposition* in 1867, but they were so effective, that the whole neighbourhood protested against them, and they were summarily silenced after the first day.

The tone of the horn at St. Catherine's is very loud when heard in the line of the bell, and seems to have peculiar power of piercing the fog; it is audible out to sea at many miles' distance.

The inhabitants of the village of Niton, about a mile inland from the lighthouse, complained at first of the unearthly noises they occasionally heard proceeding from the establishment; but as soon as they learnt the cause, and found how seldom they were wanted, we believe they, with great good sense, withdrew their objection.

If this fog-signal should prove successful, it will obviously be a great public utility, for it will not only be possible to make it warn ships of the proximity of land, but by varying its sounds, it may be used also to inform them what place it proceeds from, and thus to indicate the geographical position they are in. There is no reason why there should not be more pipes than one, and if these were properly tuned, it would be possible to play a simple tune upon them. Moreover, ships themselves, as well as land stations, might be easily provided with such apparatus, which would be useful also for night-signals in clear weather. One vessel might thus telegraph to another, in the densest fog, or might announce her approach to a harbour on the darkest night, at the same time declaring her name and nationality. So that if, at some future time, we should be startled by hearing "Yankee Doodle," "Partant pour la Syrie," or "Rule Britannia," resounding from mid-channel, we shall know that it is not the voice of any melodious sea-nymph, but merely an American, French, or English ship notifying her arrival by the aid of her fog-horns.

YES, THIS TIME THERE COULD BE NO MISTAKE—THE FAINT, DISTANT BARK OF A DOG!

Against Time.

CHAPTER XX.

The Picnic on Ben-y-Gair.

FORTUNATELY all went well, and Mr. Childersleigh went down to Scotland. Very early morning on the 11th of August saw him emerge from the inn where he had slept, to take his seat on the hybrid conveyance, looking an omnibus and christened a mail-cart, that passed Killoden gate. "Rin them out, Tonald," said the half-groom, half-gillie who drove, to his under-strapper, with the swagger of the coachman of the Salisbury "High-flyer," regarding the half-starved screws with looks of honest pride; and away they rattled along the street of the old-fashioned High-land burgh, the charioteer and Hugh, and a couple of plaid-swathed south-country shepherds, huddled up together on the narrow box-seat. A toppling avalanche of promiscuous packages, culminating in a ponderous coil of galvanized wire and an eighteen-gallon cask of sheep-shearing fluid, threatened them from behind, while beneath their feet, among the parcels in the yawning boot, a couple of pointers and a petulant half-caste colley fought and growled and slept by turns.

Sams, fortunately for himself, was not of the party. As for his master, although starting at an hour so matinal as to preclude all idea of breakfast, and contorted into an attitude uncomfortable enough to gratify the spiritual pride of a Fakir, on the whole he thoroughly enjoyed it all. Never in his life before had he breathed an air so fresh, for never in his life had he been penned so long in cities. The horses broke into their very best shambling gallop along the bit of level that stretched by the weed-strewn beach, whence you looked away to the dim hills in the distance over the rippling expanse of blue, blotched by the brown-sailed herring-boats. Thence they turned inland, passing venerable rookeries, and more venerable mansions with the grey smoke curling up from the chimneys in the stirless air; between the trim

beech-hedges, under the covers sloping from the heather hills to the meadows and the cornland; sometimes dipping sharp with both wheels locked, but for the most part pulling more or less stiffly against the collar; crossing bridges flung over chasms where the summer-dwindled streams fretted far down below in their beds of rock, and the salmon, baulked by the too formidable leaps, lolled lazily up to the flies in the transparent pools; past sedge-fringed lakes dotted over with duck and coot, the birds at the noise of the grinding wheels skimming the still surface like grape-shot; till, always mounting, forest-trees gave place to fir, and fir again to the natural birch-glades. Then the road stole its upward way through a chaos of granite-boulders cropping out among the rank beds of bracken and bramble, while over them the white birch-stems gleamed and glistened to the morning sun, their grey-green tresses weeping in the morning dew and trembling in the morning air.

A harder pull yet and a sharper turn, and Loch Loden lay below, playing in and out among the feet of the mountains that cast their shadows on its bosom: with the lodge cowering down on a nook of natural lawn that ran back from the fringe of gravel beach. Like an intelligent man who understood his business, the architect had subordinated the beautiful to the safe and snug, and left his handiwork as little of a blot on the picturesque face of surrounding nature as circumstances admitted. You saw a broad-eaved, low-roofed, comfortable two-storied dwelling, with its stout double casements, and its glass-covered storm-gallery running along the lake front and sheltering the sitting-rooms.

While the traveller was looking affectionately and hungrily down upon the scene from above, the descending vehicle had already been sighted from below. Sir Basil, in a shooting-dress—with little left about him of the banker but some lingering stiffness of manner, collar and tie, was standing by his gate hospitably expectant. His hearty welcome carried Hugh back to the old school-days when he used to jump down there, beside himself with Highland air and glorious anticipations of fun. Indeed, it was mainly for the pleasure of those old associations he had travelled as he had done in the comfortless mail-cart.

"Delighted to see you, Hugh, my boy. We didn't wait breakfast. Killoden appetites, as you ought to know, won't bear regulating by Highland mails. We communicated with the kitchen, though, the moment we caught sight of you, and there are the girls all ready to give you your tea." While the lounging gillies, bustling into life, were descending the paraphernalia, Sir Basil hurried him on to where he had seen muslins and ribbons fluttering in the porch. The young ladies were as blooming as anything he had passed that morning, and beamed nearly as bright a welcome on him as the Highland weather. George, hospitably practical, cut the greetings short, sympathetically dragging his friend off to the breakfast-room.

"Now, Maude, I daresay Hugh's quite ready to listen while you talk, if you only make him comfortable. You may as well get to work on

that pie of Morell's, Hugh, while hoping for other things. Ah! here they come. Which will you begin with, the bacon, the Finnan haddocks, or the kipper? Or stay, just make a sweep of these few chops before they cool. Don't be afraid of them; they don't come from the Cheviots, my *bêtes blanches*. I insisted on the governor importing a score of the small blackfaced this season for our own private breakfast-table."

So, with George heaping his plates, Maude filling his cup, and Lucy pressed into the service too, laughingly arranging relays of scones and oatcakes, cranberry preserve, and heather honey against what seemed the unlikely chance of his ever reaching them, Mr. Childersleigh, with a luxurious sense of well-being, basked in a Highland welcome, and revelled in a Highland breakfast.

Nor was that opening promise of his visit belied. What is rare enough in this chequered life, each day as it came more than realized the pleasurable anticipations with which he had set his face to the north. Killoden was a very pleasant house: every manner of luxury, and no sort of ceremony; while, as its inmates were town's-people spending their well-earned holiday in the country, they enjoyed proportionately the one and the other. "Upon my word, I envy you fellows this life of yours over here," McAlpine broke in, one evening he had been dining at the lodge, as the gentlemen sat over their wine.

"I'm sure I don't know why you should," returned George. "Putting the deer in Carradale out of the question, your shooting in Baragoil is as good as anything we have, except, perhaps, our best beat by the Blackwater. If I weren't fond of our place for its own sake, I'd change it against Baragoil any day."

"I wasn't speaking of your feathers or your fur. You young men never half appreciate the blessings you enjoy. I don't say a bachelor party is a bad thing in its season, in fine weather for instance. You keep your own hours, and settle comfortably to your dinner without letting the dishes cool while you talk, when you come home with the appetite you've hunted down on the hill. Even for a single wet day now and then it's all very well: you rest your muscles and you write your letters. But the second palls upon you, and the third is the very mischief. Nothing to fall back on but cigars and sherry, and shaking the barometer to persuade it to take a less desponding view of the weather and the situation. Now, none of us three have much of a literary bent, and if Jubbulpore had touched my liver, looking on at Rushbrook and Barrington yawning duets would have given me chronic blue devils long before this."

"Well, but over here?"

"Over here! Why haven't you the ladies?" grumbled McAlpine. "Don't I tell you you know nothing whatever of your blessings?"

"I tell you what, McAlpine," said Hugh gravely, "you really ought to have advice; you look well enough, but I never saw a man so changed. Your liver may be all right enough, but your heart must be affected. I little thought I'd live to hear you talk sentimentally."

"You've lived to see a good many things you didn't dream of, Childersleigh, I suspect. I like to enjoy all the gifts of Providence, ladies among the rest—in their proper place, mind you: but if you go and repeat our conversation, as you're quite capable of doing, you needn't mention that reservation. If you had been out, as I have, for weeks at a time after *shikar* in the Wynaut jungle, with no society but niggers, you'd know the cheeriness of having your quarters brightened up by light or ladies of an evening."

"After all this, Mr. McAlpine, I shall have less hesitation in pressing you to travel over your long seven miles of hill," said Sir Basil hospitably. "But suppose we join the ladies now; really you ought to tell them all this yourself."

"As you please, Sir Basil," returned the chieftain, with a grin; "only they would never believe me if I did. I'm a greatly misunderstood man. Even my chief, Hugh Childersleigh, there, as you see, knows little of me."

"We've brought you McAlpine, Maude, in most eloquent and sentimental vein. He's just been reading us a most uncalled-for lecture on our unappreciated blessings—blessings, in this instance, embodied in you and Miss Winter."

Thrown together for nearly three weeks in the close quarters of the lodge, Maude and Hugh had gradually been shaking themselves back into the old brotherly and sisterly footing. It was very hard for restraint and formality to hold their own against the easy manner of life at the lodge, within and without, where protracted *tête-à-têtes*, rough scrambles, impulsive hand-grasps, help asked for and given, were matters of daily and hourly recurrence. With George, too, treating Hugh as a brother, it was impossible always to remember that Maude was not a cousin at the very least. So in slips of the tongue, not perhaps altogether so involuntary as they seemed, "Maude" fell from the lips instead of "Miss Childersleigh," and the inevitable thaw had followed that breaking of the ice.

"To be sure," Hugh proceeded, "he rather spoiled the compliment by hinting you might become the reverse of blessings in anything but very wet weather."

"All malice, and jealousy, and evil speaking, Miss Childersleigh. Don't you believe him. I'm always misinterpreted or misunderstood, as I told them. Why, we haven't above twice had more than three wet days running during the three weeks we've been here, yet as they tell you I've been quite unable to suppress my feelings."

"I'm very glad you betrayed them, for they are reciprocated, I assure you. Are they not, Lucy?"

"Unquestionably. Only Mr. McAlpine has the advantage of us. We can't very well go over to look for him at Baragoil, or even venture to speak so frankly as he does when he comes to see us here."

"No; that's very true," agreed Maude. "But if you feel so strongly as you say, Mr. McAlpine, why do you come so very seldom?"

"To find you out, every one of you, as I did last Wednesday week? It was as fine a scenting day as you'd wish to see, Miss Maude. A bright sun and a light breeze; the birds sitting as if they were on eggs; and Rushbrook there killed nineteen hares to his own gun before lunch in Strathcollin; while Barrington, at the back of Carramore, knocked over a yeld hind and a couple of stags, big as bullocks, heads like bison, brow, brae, and trae antlers; and I missed it all, coming after you, and went back as I came, without a glimpse at a soul of you."

"He came after Hugh, there, about some Crédit Foncier business," laughed Rushbrook, "and used most unguarded language at being constrained to do it: nothing at all, however, to what he said when he came home, having found Hugh, and the butler, and the cellar-key all picnicing on the hill."

"Just what I tell you, Miss Maude," retorted McAlpine, waiving the special imputations; "you make a long eternal picnic of it for those fellows. One ought to take the rough with the smooth in this world; but, by Jove, you make it all smooth for them."

"You wouldn't have said so if you had seen our boots when we came down from the high beat on Ben-y-Gair yesterday; would he, George? As for his roughing it, as he calls it, will you believe it, Miss Winter, he had grouse *salmi*, truffled and piping hot, a full half-a-dozen miles from the house the other day?"

"My medical men always have told me my constitution needs supporting. I've been accustomed to hot tiffins all my life," explained McAlpine, mildly.

"Really, I'm almost afraid, Mr. McAlpine, after all we hear," said Maude, "otherwise I should have asked you to spend to-morrow in Paradise—to come to a picnic with us at the Lady's Well."

"To-morrow did you say, Miss Childersleigh? Do you know I've grave doubts as to the weather to-morrow? I didn't much like the look of it as we drove over this evening. I said so to Rushbrook."

"I can't say I've the slightest recollection of your saying anything of the sort, but I do know you had set your heart on stalking to-morrow in Carramore."

"I tell you what, McAlpine," interposed George, laughing, "if you care to come, we'll combine business with pleasure, and look up the ptarmigan. We can lunch early—call it breakfast, if you please—and afterwards have a long afternoon on Ben-y-Gair. What do you say?"

"Why, that I shall be delighted," returned the chieftain, promptly. "Don't you believe anything about my plans for stalking, Miss Childersleigh, or think the ptarmigan are the slightest inducement, although McLachlan does tell me they swarm this year on Ben-y-Gair. I'll come over to Eden with pleasure; that's to say, if Rushbrook and Barrington have made no other arrangements. They don't deserve consideration at my hands, yet I can't very well throw them over."

Those gentlemen, however, assured him they had no plans to disturb,

and would like nothing so much as the picnic; so McAlpine, with an excellent grace, surrendered himself the victim of his civil speeches. The picnic became a settled thing, with the Lady's Well as the trysting-place. It bubbled up in Ben-y-Gair, some 3,000 feet above the sea, and coming from Killoden and Baragoil, you approached it from nearly opposite directions.

The group assembled next morning on the grass and gravel before Killoden Lodge formed a picture not unworthy, in its way, of its magnificent background. Seven or eight sleek, rough-coated mountain-ponies, their bright eyes staring through uncombed forelocks, one saddled for Sir Basil, two more for the ladies, the rest with pads and panniers; three or four boys, bare-headed, bare-legged, in weather-bleached kilts in attendance on them, their eyes as keen and their elf-locks as innocent of comb as those of the "shelties;" McLachlan and half a score of gillies in their rough grey homespun, the shade of the rocks and sheep, and scores of objects in nature, animate and inanimate—a shade that blended the wearer into the landscape at an incredibly short distance. Wiry, good-humoured fellows they looked, with faces kindling at the prospect of the sport and the fun, and something of a common fiery tinge in the complexion and hair that told of temper as warm as their natures. McLachlan's huge black retriever, Bran, gravely did the honours of the green to the company from the house. He superintended the arrangements with the air of dignified ownership, given by an all-the-year-round residence at the place, a dignity slightly compromised when he passed near one of the savoury packages that were spread out on the grass before being stowed away in the panniers. Smourach, the shaggy little fox-terrier, with no dignity at all to keep up, made not the slightest attempt to conceal his engrossing interest in the commissariat arrangements, and with one bloodshot eye half closed, and one wiry leg tucked up high in the air, stood sniffing with intense gusto at the wrappings of a venison pasty. Three couples of black and tan setters, mild-eyed silken-haired beauties, were admonished against the capital sin of *gourmandise* by an occasional jerk from the keepers who held them in leash.

The contingent the house contributed was a less characteristic one, although some of them were well worth the looking at. We have met all the party before, except an officer of Engineers, detached on ordnance survey duty, who, chancing to pass that morning on the mail-cart, on his way to look after some contouring, and visit a party of his men in Glen Doherty, had been waylaid and almost forcibly dragged off by the hospitable insistance of his acquaintance, Captain Childersleigh.

"Good morning, McLachlan," began the young lady of the house. "I told you we should have a lovely day."

"'Deed then, Miss Maude, it's a grand morning, but I never like to see Ben-y-Gair with his night-cap on so late and the wind in the west."

"Nonsense, McLachlan; to hear you croak one would take you for a raven. Sir Basil says the glass is fixed at set fair."

"I'm thinking, Miss Maude, it'll be a south country glass, maybe, and not just altogether at home in Killoden yet. Not that I'm telling you it would be a bad day after all, only I wouldn't trust too much to it or to the glass either."

"Why, who would in this climate of yours, McLachlan? If you think you're not going to have my mackintosh cloak in charge as usual, you'll find out your mistake—here it comes."

The muscular Gael showed his white teeth in a paternal smile, as he threw the strap that secured the roll of cloak across the opposite shoulder to that which supported the stalking-glass without which he never stirred from his hearth.

"I'll do that, Miss Maude, though I will say for you, you never were frightened for hill weather yet. But if it does hold up to-day, it will be the better for you and the worse for the birds."

"If you don't mean to waste time, Maude, in making your peace with McAlpine when you get to the well, we had better be moving," broke in her brother.

"Why we never promised him his breakfast-lunch or lunch-breakfast, whichever you call it, before midday."

"And about cooling the wine then. You don't imagine an old Indian like him, a brace of Sybarites like Rushbrook and Barrington, to say nothing of reasoning beings like ourselves, will care to drink it mulled by a sun like this! It will be a very long couple of hours before the ponies land you and the luncheon. It's no light work for cavalry picking its way through the Red Moss, to say nothing of getting up the Giant's Staircase."

"Well, I see the panniers have swallowed the luncheon, and Lucy, I trust, has made her very last journey upstairs, and fetched the last of the things she has forgotten, so you'd better set the column in motion, and *en route, vieux grognard*."

Off the cavalcade started, intense excitement prevailing among those it left behind: maids flitting, half hidden, among the fir-trees, making the most of the break in the stagnation of their kitchen life, dogs dashing themselves against the pales of their kennels in mad paroxysms of jealousy. Long after the sound of voices and ring of pony-hoofs had died in the distance, the despairing howls of the deserted ones made morning hideous. Turning up from the road by the side of the low grey bridge, the party began to mount by the banks of the leaping stream. More from habit than to pilot a path, the ponies would trust no one to find for them. McLachlan strode on in advance, like the tambour-major of a *corps* of French sappers, flourishing in his hand the black oak sapling with the snaky head. Up, with many a slight trip and stumble even of the sure-footed ponies, by heather and bog, by bog and heather; through the red moss, where the eagles who made their eyrie in the north cliffs of Ben-y-Gair, were hunting on the hover overhead; and then, in a supreme struggle, up the Giant's Staircase, where it would have been no bad thing

to have borrowed the eagles' wings. However, at last, the band of pleasure-bound pilgrims picked their way toilfully along the face of the last gigantic step, and, rising the ridge of the *Col* above, the leading files opened out on the little meadow, the object of the expedition.

"There they are before us, and, for as prosaic a set of individuals as one is likely to meet, don't they group picturesquely, Miss Winter?" exclaimed Hugh. Miss Winter did not answer immediately, and he turned to look at her. The girl sat fairly entranced in admiration, her eyes most eloquently expressive, if her lips were closed. There was a grand effect to one unused to mountain scenery in that bit of soft green lawn, shut in by those weather-shivered mountain-walls, that towered up to meet the clear blue sky above. A group of half-savage sheep, scared out of their favourite grazing ground, plunged to their curling horns among the rocks and the heather, stood ready for further flight at a second's notice, and gazed shyly down on the intruders. Some rugged shadows from the rocks, some specks of floating brown from the rare fleecy clouds fell over the turf, and then there were the figures that clustered round the spring, laughing and sparkling in the middle of them, a diamond of the desert. Lucy had bent forward in her saddle, unconsciously tightening her grasp on the bridle, stopping her pony and the whole cavalcade as she contemplated the picture. No one but Hugh could see her face, but those she brought to a standstill behind her commented, of course, on her inaction.

"Fairy-stricken, Miss Winter?" shouted George, who was following her in exuberant spirits. "I should have thought those gross beings by the fountain were safe to have exorcised alike the spirits of earth and air."

Lucy started, and jerked vigorously at the bridle of her stiff-necked and hard-mouthed mount, who, having settled himself to cropping the grass with the true *carpe diem* promptitude of a mountain-bred beast, stolidly ignored the appeal. Hugh chivalrously came to the rescue, seized him by the head, and dragged him forcibly onward, paying himself, however, for his assistance by gazing admiringly in the rider's face. Colouring up in the consciousness of her display of sensibility, her face lighted with the glorious sun and the pleasure that had not faded out before the blushes, never had Hugh seen her look half so pretty.

"Pretty! no, that's a blasphemous absurdity," he corrected himself, in soliloquy; "lovely I mean to say. I wonder if I ever shall get to know anything of that girl. She seems so quiet, so unimpressionable, sometimes so expressionless,—and see there! Magnificent, is it not, Miss Winter?" he whispered, changing his tone, gently caressing the rough mane of the pony, and, perhaps, incidentally the gloved hand of the rider. For himself, he had a profound sympathy with nature in her changing moods; but, from habit and the dread of misappreciation, he locked it back in his bosom. Generally, he would as soon have thought of putting his thoughts in words as of whispering his heart secrets, if he had any, in the board-room in Lothbury. But a display of congenial feeling was apt to turn the key before he was well aware of its being touched,

and, for the moment, he felt drawn to Lucy as he had never been before. And there was something in his tone that let her guess it. It pleased her to feel the distance that separated them shrink under the gentle influences of the moment; to see one of the barriers crumbling that her modest self-appreciation had raised; to know they had sympathies, and at least one secret in common.

"So grand and beautiful that it seems almost profanity breaking in on the solitude with this noisy picnic of ours. How foolish I am; but you won't betray me, Mr. Childersleigh, I'm sure," she added, appealingly.

"Betray you! not I, indeed, Miss Winter," and he threw more warmth, perhaps, than needful into the asseveration and the reassuring look that accompanied it. "It seems peaceful enough now, but you would tell a very different tale had you seen it, as I have, in an autumn storm."

"It is the idea of what it might be that impresses you, and awes you while you admire."

"Yes, it's savage nature in an enchanted calm. Beauty lulled to sleep in the arms of Terror. I suspect our advancing hampers are more welcome objects to those Philistines from Baragoil than Ben-y-Gair in all his glory," he added aloud, and in a very different key, while the rest of the party came crowding round them as they disengaged themselves from the defile and spread out over the green hollow.

Rushbrook came forward to welcome them, jödelling in the lightness of his heart. They might have been in the Forest cantons, treading by the hallowed fountains in the classic meadow of Grütli: McAlpine, his foot set down on his native hills, in philabeg and martin-cat sporran, although the former was of grey home-spun, and not of the gorgeous tartans woven by Clan Alpine's matrons; Barrington, in voluminous knickerbockers, looking ten years more juvenile than when we met him in M. Blanc's hospitable halls, a full year younger than at dinner the night before.

A jolly luncheon it was, and although all the men were *bons vivants* in their way—perhaps, if the truth were spoken, the ladies, too, according to their lights—not the least pleasant part was the preparations. Chablis, Leoville, and the domestic Bass cradled in the bed of the stream that rippled down from the fountain; Roederer and *Veuve* Clicquot sweltered in soaking swaddling bands in the hottest sun. Hard by crackled a fire by which the engineer and Lord Rushbrook officiated; one cherishing it tenderly, while the other offered to its warm kiss a plump young pair of grouse, artistically plucked and trussed and impaled on the screws of a couple of cleaning rods. The soldier had had his own experiences of camping out in Acadia. Near them, and sneering at their rude cookery, McAlpine superintended a pet portable *batterie de cuisine* of his own, in whose recesses various delicate comestibles were simmering. Even Sir Basil caught the spirit of the thing, and insisted on making himself generally troublesome, as scullion unattached. The snowy cloth was stretched on the velvet sward, the plates and forks securing it from the liberties of the faint breeze that was dallying with it.

"Pleasanter this than your al-fresco tiffins in the Wynaut, eh, McAlpine?" queried Barrington, in the intervals of a chicken mayonnaise.

"So far as company goes, certainly, and perhaps climate," returned McAlpine, who was paying his court to a snipe *salmi* he had *rechauffé* himself. "But I won't be so ungrateful as to abuse our jungle spreads. Ah, you ought to have seen them, Miss Winter; with your presence and Miss Childersleigh's they'd have been pretty nearly as perfect as mortal meal could be."

"It's distance lends enchantment to your view, I suspect, Mr. McAlpine," returned Lucy, laughing. "For my part, I fear the apprehension of being lunched upon myself might have quite spoiled my appetite. I should always have been looking over my shoulder for a man-eater dropping in on our party in an unfriendly way."

"Or a python, or a boa-constrictor, to say nothing of scorpions and centipedes, and all manner of humbler creeping things slipping in more unobtrusively," chimed in Maude.

"I told you I much preferred my company here; but after all, bar the tigers, and they were generally rather scarce for our tastes, there is very little to object to in the others you mention, is there, Captain Brown?" said McAlpine, turning to the engineer.

"I can't say, I'm sure. I've never enjoyed an Indian lunch, and I'm sorry for it now, as I much suspect, from your account, I should, if possible, have appreciated this one all the more. So far as my own quiet entomological experiences go, I can very well dispense with the North-American mosquitos."

"Ah, you don't know Highland midges, perhaps," said Rushbrook; "if we had only a few of them here they would rather disturb the Watteau-like repose of our little party."

"More like a scene from the *Decameron* than a group by Watteau," remarked Hugh. "Depend on it, Watteau's simpering shepherdesses and powdered prigs never made themselves half so agreeable."

"Yes, Hugh," agreed Maude, seriously, "the scenery is so thoroughly Tuscan in its softness; our retainers so strikingly Italian in character and costume!"

"You may laugh, Maude, but we've seen as wild backgrounds in the Apeninnes as these rocks of Ben-y-Gair; the Lady's Well might be a fountain in Vallombrosa, although it can very well spare the fallen leaves; and Italian grass was never half so green out of a picture. As for McLachlan and his satellites, imagine them Italians, in carnival time, masquerading as northern barbarians, and there you have it."

The desultory chat ran on till the pauses became more frequent, and a soft Italian languor seemed to have stolen on the party. No one was in haste to suggest a move. The gillies strewn carelessly about the turf, prone on their backs, and with their brown freckled hands clasped behind their heads, lay lazily smoking their short black clays, their dreamy eyes

languidly following the "reek" as it floated hither and thither in the air. The dogs were quartering moors in dreamland, setting phantom grouse with spasmodic grunts, or, to judge by their occasional fitful starts, breaking and running in where there was no fear of the dog-whip before their eyes. The sportsmen had, to all seeming, forgotten their sport; even the keen McAlpine, placid and taciturn, was lost in the meditative enjoyment of his second manilla.

"I thought you had an appointment with the ptarmigan, McAlpine, or what may be the meaning of all that battery of breechloaders?"

"Very true, Sir Basil, so we had; but gallantry before sport: the ptarmigan's convenience must wait on that of the ladies."

"Come, Mr. McAlpine, that really is too audacious," broke in Maude. "You have not only been silent yourself for this last quarter of an hour, but all the rest of us were gradually silencing ourselves in civil sympathy. Your drowsy influence has gained the keepers and the very dogs."

"My father's right, at any rate," said George, consulting his watch. "If we do intend to go to work on the ptarmigan at all, we ought to lose no time about it. What do you mean to do, yourself, sir?"

"I? Oh I shall be moving quietly homewards," returned Sir Basil; "and you young ladies, do you come with me?"

"Lucy has brought her block and her colours, I know," said Maude. "You mean to make a sketch of Ben-y-Gair, don't you, Lucy?"

"Only if there happened to be plenty of time, Maude."

"And there is plenty of time, if you feel sufficiently industrious. Seat yourself on the plaids there, and begin. You can't go wrong about the point of view. If the gentlemen can spare me McLachlan, I should like to climb the shoulder of Ben-y-Gair, and look down on the other side. You will have plenty of time, and I shall know where to find you when I come back."

"I think I'd better come with you, dear; I don't care the least in the world about caricaturing Ben-y-Gair."

"I assure you you can't make him uglier than he can look when he likes. No, Lucy, either you stay and make your sketch, or I don't go.

So Sir Basil and his pony, and the gillie who attached himself to the pair, picked their deliberate way downwards toward the lodge. Lucy seated herself and got out her sketching things; while, "setting the stout heart to the stae brae," the rest of the party braced themselves to the steep sides of Ben-y-Gair.

CHAPTER XXI.

Cast away in the Clouds.

"Well, McLachlan, and what do you say to the weather now?" demanded Maude, triumphantly, of the keeper, as she steadied herself, and was dragged upwards by the hand twisted in the strap that crossed his

shoulder. Resolved not to be a drag upon them, with a manner that would take no denial, she had refused all tenders of company, comfort, and assistance from the gentlemen.

"'Deed then, Miss Maude, and I like the look of it less than before. Only see to they clouds rolling round by the sides of Alt-na-car."

"I see them, but depend on it they've no idea whatever of coming our way, and nothing can be clearer than Ben-y-Gair. He's put off his night-cap at last."

"And I'm not that sure, but I'd rather he'd kept it on. If the wind was to shift a bit, another half-hour and you mightn't be able to see your hand before you for the mist. Anyhow I'll not let you out of my sight, Miss Maude," said McLachlan, firmly.

"I'm quite sure I don't intend to lose sight and hold of you, so long as the walking's as rough as this. Not that I'm the least afraid of being cast away in the clouds."

Truly the walking had grown rough enough. The bare turf, with its broken patches of stunted heather, was fast giving way to what looked very like the scattered *débris* of a stone-quarry sprinkled with slates. First the bleached pebbles came singly, and then by handfuls; later you trod over whole battalions of them, through which there shimmered in places a thin brown glimmer of sickly vegetation.

The guns had taken a line of their own, turning away in the opposite direction. With a gillie or two interposed between each, and right shoulders slightly inclined forward, the line stepped out round the rugged shoulder of the mountain. But bright as was the sun and warm the stones they basked on, the birds were wild. Could they have come to the same conclusion as McLachlan, and foreseen some impending change in the weather? Even before the sharp mountain eye could detach the mottled grey plumage from the moss-stained granite, the flock had risen on the wing, circling high above the valley depths like a flight of rock-pigeons, only to light again far ahead on the heights they had been flushed from. In the well-founded hope of tiring them down, the party picked their way patiently onwards, snapping off the breechloaders from time to time at impossible ranges for the sake of doing something, and in the hope of scaring the quarry into sitting. The luncheon, with its premature conviviality, was but indifferent training for men who were labouring hard, unsustained even by the excitement of fortunate sport. So Rushbrook, always rather an indolent man, began to think.

"I tell you what, Childersleigh, you can spare a gun; in fact it seems to me we are a trifle crowded here, and if you don't mind I shall fall out of the ranks and saunter back after your sister and McLachlan. To my mind, and at the best of times, as I told you last night, ptarmigan shooting is the meanest of sports, as the Yankees say. Most unholy walking on the chance of a pot shot or two when you have tired and frightened your birds."

"There's nothing so demoralizing as desertion, Rushbrook. Already Barrington there is trailing his gun as if he had more than enough of it.

But, however, if you have the bad taste to wish to go, and to cut the sport for the scenery, do just as you please. It's liberty hill."

So Rushbrook did fall out, and strolled back, retracing his steps, till, in a fold in the ground, he caught sight of Miss Childersleigh's fluttering garments and McLachlan's bulky figure.

"Why, Lord Rushbrook, you here! When I first caught a glimpse of a human shape in the solitude, I took it for the gnome of the mountain. To what are we indebted for this most unlooked-for pleasure?"

"Chiefly, of course, to the attractions of your small but very pleasant little party, Miss Childersleigh. Partly, to be very candid, to the disagreeables of a wild ptarmigan chase over the roughest of ground after the longest of lunches."

"If you attach yourself to us, you'll find your sorrows are only beginning. McLachlan asseverates from that hill before us you can see the Atlantic, and so I mean to see it."

"On a very clear day I said, Miss; such a day as you wouldn't have, perhaps, six times in a summer."

"And what do you call this, then? In the direction we are going there's not a suspicion of mist, not one fleck of cloud against the sky."

McLachlan shook his head and muttered something inaudibly, but more, as it seemed, to hedge his credit as a prophet, than for any more immediate reason. Upwards they zigzagged, picking their toilsome way in comparative silence. Conversation is apt to flag when you become miserly chary of each breath you draw, when you are losing yourself in painful calculations as to the number of yet more painful steps that divide you from the Pisgah you pant for.

McLachlan, whose case-hardened lungs were working as pleasantly as if he had been lounging on the gravel before Killoden Lodge, and who was utterly uninfluenced by grovelling considerations like these, respectfully hazarded a question:

"Beg pardon, my lord, but were the dogs behaving pretty steady when your lordship left? It's not nice work for them at all, with they shy beasts of ptarmigan."

"Steady—enough—considering—young dogs—wild," puffed his lordship.

"Sure, my lord, they would be keeping the young ones in the couples. I laid my commands upon Hamish never to be letting them go when I wasn't there."

"Hamish disobeyed then: at least, all the six were ranging when I left," returned Lord Rushbrook, making the conversation into which he had been drawn an excuse for pausing in the ascent. McLachlan said nothing, but was obviously miserably ill at ease. He walked as one distraught, and when his companions addressed him, answered far wide of the mark. At last Rushbrook took compassion on his evident anxiety. Had his lordship been more of a lady's-man, he might have been suspected of manœuvring for a *tête-à-tête* with Miss Childersleigh.

"I tell you what it is, keeper; your mind is travelling wide after these puppies of yours. Why don't you follow it with your body? Perhaps Miss Childersleigh won't mind trusting herself to me for the time being, and when you come back you know where to look for us."

McLachlan hesitated, torn evidently in opposite directions, cast a long look up at the heavens; from where he stood saw nothing whatever to warrant uneasiness, growled in his beard a deep malediction against the offending Hamish, and hesitated again. But Maude, pityingly insisted on his going off on leave, and finally, with many parting cautions as to the most practicable line to follow, McLachlan darted away on the track of the now distant guns.

Maude and her new escort got on together very pleasantly in every way; enjoying the scramble, and seeing no reason whatever for taking it otherwise than easily; stopping continually to take breath, or, as they euphemised it, to admire the beauties of the landscape. Well worth admiring it was. The eye ranging away over many a valley absolutely desolate of human life, or with its solitude broken only by some isolated shieling; over sanctuaries of the red deer, where silver threads wound themselves round the base of purple mountains; over summit on summit, and ridge on ridge, to the faint yellow haze that marked the corn-land of the distant lowlands.

Ambition grows by what it feeds on, and the ambitioned shoulder scaled, Miss Childersleigh set her affections on another and a higher one. It would be turning their backs on the shooting party, but with the shooting party they had no concern. It would be throwing over their assignation with McLachlan, but from the point where he hoped to find them, he could see their figures in the distance. Maude urged that she was an excellent walker, and Rushbrook, who had no desire whatever to baulk her, suggested that when the keeper rejoined them, he could easily be sent down for her pony.

They descended into a hollow that looked as if a mammoth cairn had been upset in it by the frolicsome powers of the air; or as if some Highland Morgante Maggiore and his fellows had been in the habit of raining down rocks and boulders on it from the heights above. Picking her way where torn boots and gloves that split in the clutches she made at the air in frantic attempts to balance herself seemed ominous of falls and sprained ankles, Miss Childersleigh was naturally constrained to put her companion's outstretched hand in constant requisition. Their progress was at best a good deal of the halt leading the lame, and the slanting sun beating down on the glowing pavement, made their work the harder. "What a blessed breeze," panted Maude, turning her flushed cheek to the puff of dampish air that fanned it of a sudden.

"One would say it came from the earth instead of the heavens," returned Rushbrook, looking up at a light cloud or two that clung motionless to the sky. "And wherever it came from, it's gone as it came," he added.

"Surely that can't be fog," said Maude, doubtfully, looking at what seemed a slight thickening of the air, through which the objects a moment before so preternaturally bright seemed perhaps a trifle less clear.

"I don't know, Miss Childersleigh; it does look unpleasantly like it: I hope we shan't find our view spoiled after all our trouble. And at least, there's no mistake about that," he went on, a moment after, pointing to an unmistakable wreath of vapour winding itself swiftly round the brow of the mountain.

"McLachlan was talking this morning of Ben-y-Gair in his nightcap. It almost looks, does it not, as if he was tying a handkerchief round his neck in preparation for a damp evening?"

"A very dingy one, then; although by its appearance it must have been wrung through water. Perhaps he does his washing in his moss-pots, which would account for the colour. But seriously, Miss Childersleigh, it does look like a hint to turn—as if a change were brewing in the weather."

"I confess my heart misgives me; I don't feel at all inclined to go on on the bare chance of what we may see. As discretion is the best part of valour, suppose we keep our own secret and go quietly back."

As they turned, not a speck of mist, not the faintest haze was visible before them; nothing between them and the blue sky, so far as their horizon stretched, but those few light summer clouds. Still the sun beat warmly on their shoulders.

"Upon my word, Lord Rushbrook, after all it does seem like arrant cowardice giving it up, does it not? That fog can't mean anything; I believe if we went on we should have a magnificent view after all."

"Look there, Miss Childersleigh!" He had stopped and turned again. The light veil of fog they had seen had thickened into a dense curtain screening off everything behind it in palpable darkness. It was travelling forward swiftly, as a good runner might cover the level ground; and although the sun was bright as before, it was the mockery of a parting smile before an impending eclipse. The cloud-curtain touched his disc, changing his mellow gold to lurid red; the next moment and he was extinguished in the dripping folds, and glorious day had given place to a weird and fleeting twilight. The stones grew to boulders, the boulders to rocks, changing as by magic to dolmen and menhirs and putting on even stranger and more fantastic forms. Had it not been for his action, the mountain-hare that went skipping by them to his home in the cairn above, might have been taken for a sheep or a roe-deer.

A few seconds more and they were in the depth of the brooding darkness, literally a darkness that might be felt, for it was the blackness of concentrated vapour, and even before it had well swallowed them they were damp as from a shower of spray.

"An unpleasantly sudden change to come over the spirits of our sunny day-dreams, Miss Childersleigh," said Rushbrook, assuming a cheeriness he was far from feeling. He would have given not a little the fog had caught them some few hundred feet lower down.

"Do let us get on," was all Maude said in reply, quickening her steps, and looking and feeling most thoroughly frightened.

"Don't hurry, Miss Childersleigh, you'll only tire yourself out; before we meet your pony we may have to walk a little farther than we intended," rejoined Rushbrook in a quiet matter-of-fact voice, ignoring Maude's evident alarm. "All we have to do is to keep towards the left and downwards. It's slow work picking our steps where we can barely see our feet, but we cannot very well go wrong."

"Can't go wrong!" If Rushbrook gave faith himself to what he said so sanguinely, he knew little indeed of mountain fogs. More likely it was a pious falsehood told to cheer his frightened companion. Let any one shut his eyes and attempt to walk a straight line on the most familiar ground and see what his success will be. Try it when you have to thread your way through a maze of stumbling-blocks over broken ground, and you may picture the bewilderment in which a few minutes of doubtful progress landed the castaways. The hill sides were too uneven to make their inclination even vaguely reliable as a guide. If the light air had kept breathing steadily from the quarter whence it came at first, it might have been clue enough to lead them out of their difficulties; but it puffed and lulled and changed, and at last, when Rushbrook held up his damp finger, chilled it on all sides most impartially. No wonder. The moment a breath of air was caught out stirring in Ben-y-Gair it became the plaything of a score of fantastic shaped corries, who twisted and buffeted it till, losing its head altogether, it blew not as it listed itself, but as its capricious tormentors willed.

"McLachlan must be somewhere near us by this time, and he knows the lie of this pleasant country of his better than we do. I'll give him a call." And Rushbrook recommenced his jödels. But somehow the heavy air seemed to stifle the sounds as they issued from his throat. The very echoes, noisy as they generally were, growled hoarsely as if they had caught cold and found difficulty in articulating; even when he fired off his gun they gave half-hearted response to the deadened sound.

In the darkness and the depressing atmosphere, with the wearying work that seemed only to plunge them deeper in trouble and peril, Maude felt her sinking heart reacting on her failing limbs. Not yet would she admit the idea of an actual danger; but the shadow of it was blighting and threatened to paralyse her. Like the worn traveller caught in an Alpine snowstorm, she felt disposed to sink down where she was and wait in bodily peace, on the chance of safety coming to her. Rushbrook guessed rather than saw the state to which his companion was tending. He was as selfish as the rest of us—more selfish, perhaps, than many—and in the invariable habit of surveying situations from a purely personal point of view. It surprised him now how lightly his thoughts rested on his own share in the disagreeable adventure. He recognized Maude as an incumbrance, of course; for, left to himself, his strength must sooner or later have carried him out of the clouds back into the world. Of course, in no

extremity could he have conceived himself abandoning the girl fate had cast on his hands; but he might have been expected to comfort himself with inward murmurs in the discharge of a difficult and dangerous duty.

In the danger, her strength was, in some degree, the measure of his. They might have to pass the night on the hill, and if the weather changed for the worse, it might well be one of them would never wake in the morning. "A sweet pair of babes in the wood we should make," he thought grimly. They would be sought, indeed; but how long might it be before the search began, and their friends made up their minds they were lost. They had wandered far from the place where they had separated from McLachlan, it was even a chance if the seekers ever found that starting-point for their quest.

As it was, Rushbrook felt something of actual pleasure in the charge that had devolved on him—selfishness, perhaps, in another form. In the earnest yet cheerful voice that came out of the greyness, from the pair of hands that, with brotherly importunity, pressed on Miss Childersleigh the shooting-coat he had stripped from his own shoulders, his most intimate friends would have been least likely to guess at the self-indulgent Rushbrook, who made a mock of most things in life, and would have made it his pride to disappear with a jest down the very jaws of death.

"No, indeed, Miss Childersleigh, I insist upon it; so you had better give in with a good grace. Remember, I am answerable for you to Sir Basil, and I can't bring my charge home only to hand her over to the doctor." Maude resisted hard, but was fain to yield. He could feel her shiver as he helped her to pass her arms through the sleeves.

"By good luck, I have my flask with me, and the next thing is to prescribe you a few drops of mountain-dew,—hairs of the dog that is worrying us, Miss Childersleigh."

There, too, Maude docilely yielded. She felt she must rouse herself and make a struggle, and do all that in her lay towards their common extrication. Indeed, when the first shock of being swallowed in the darkness had passed, her faculties began rapidly to rally, and her bodily strength to return with her natural courage.

"Thank you, Lord Rushbrook. I feel greatly better, and much ashamed of my passing weakness. Believe me, you may count on me so long as my strength holds out."

"That's right; and, by good fortune, we seem at last to be fairly on the slope of the hill. Once out of the thickest of all this, we shall be able to see our way a little."

They went on in silence, silence broken only by an occasional word of encouragement from Rushbrook, or by a shout, raised on the chance of its being carried to human ears. Maude scarcely wanted cheering now. She had renewed her powers, and it was just as well. After all, hope had been deferred, and the downward slope had ended in a sheer precipice, that made their way no thoroughfare. Had it not providentially lightened slightly for a moment, they might have stepped into empty air, and touched

the ground again a hundred feet below. All at once, a welcome sound broke upon Rushbrook's ear.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "at last. I hope I hear the guide that is to lead us home to Killoden."

"Why, what? You don't hear any one coming?"

"No, no, Miss Childersleigh. I'm very sorry if I raised false hopes; but I hear running water, and that, I trust, may answer our purpose nearly as well. Where it goes, we can surely follow, and, moreover, we must be lower down the mountain than I hoped."

"The precipices!"

"Most likely the stream has found a way where there are none to speak of. It's been working for centuries at smoothing them away," returned Rushbrook, hopefully. "I hope we may find a safe staircase, if a rough one. I shall go first and pilot you, and, in any case, if we have to leave the bed of the stream, we shall not lose sight of it. Here we are; and there seems, luckily, to be very little water."

It was a rough flight of steps, indeed, and a very damp one. Rushbrook had often trodden water-paths of the sort after the deer, but it had been in broad daylight; with mountaineers who relieved him of his very rifle, and on whom he was the drag and incumbrance. Yet these former stalking experiences stood him in good stead, and, although now he plunged to mid-thigh in a pool, now had to lower himself by the hands with water pouring fast into his shirt-sleeves, and feet tentatively searching in the air for a foothold, yet he managed to pioneer a practicable way for Maude. And all the time he did his utmost to keep up her spirits, laughing lightly at his own mishaps and miseries.

"Splash again. Certainly the kilt is the costume nature meant for the country. What would I not have given in the Sinai desert for water-bags as well filled and as cool as these knickerbockers of mine. It's more in the way of an otter than a Christian young lady, this romantic path of ours; but never mind, the longest road must come to an end at last, and how you will enjoy Killoden after it all. Ah—h!"

The closing ejaculation was caused by a drop into the mist very much deeper than he had counted on. He lighted on a loose stone, staggered, lost his balance, and rolled fairly over in the water, his gun-barrels ringing piteously on the pitiless rock.

"Don't be alarmed," he spluttered out through the mouthfuls of water he had involuntarily swallowed, as he struggled to his feet again. "It is nothing—nothing at all; much worse for my poor Westley Richards than for me. But take care, Miss Childersleigh, how you follow. Wait a moment."

It was with much difficulty Maude lowered herself down into his arms, but at last she did stand beside him knee deep in the pool, and this time thoroughly drenched. He began to be seriously alarmed for her. A long night's exposure in that condition might easily be fatal to a girl delicately reared. But he let nothing of it all appear in his voice; the darkness hid

his features, and he set forward and downward again, supporting her, as before, under the arm. There seemed nothing for it but to keep moving till they dropped. After its eight feet leap, the water ran more level for a time, and it was comparatively easy walking in its shallow bed. Yet Maude felt her companion totter, and now and again the hand supporting her arm involuntarily tightened on it. "Can his strength be going before my own?" she thought, and at the thought despondency began to gain on her again, and she felt her own forces threatening to ebb in sympathy. At last, after a violent stumble, Rushbrook let go his hold upon her and sank down upon the bank.

"Good heaven, Lord Rushbrook, what is the matter? Are you ill? For heaven's sake speak to me!"

There was no answer, and, terribly alarmed, she bent down to him. His eyes were closed, his face was colourless, and he had fallen limp and senseless across a stone. Her first thought was of death, and, in the horror and loneliness of the moment, a cold hand seemed to be clutching at her own heart, stilling its feverish beats. Then they went on again wildly, keeping pace and time with the fierce throbbings of her burning temples. Then reason found time to whisper it could be nothing but a swoon. She felt the two parts were changed, that she had become the stronger, and in that consciousness she acted with resolution and promptitude.

She tore open his collar and threw handfuls of the cold water in his face, although, heaven knows, all about him was wet and cold enough already. Then she rubbed his lips and temples with spirits, and finally forcing the flask between his teeth, let some of the contents flow into his throat. The eyelids trembled and lifted, then came a few incoherent words, he sat up and looked wildly about him. A minute or two more, and he was restored to full consciousness. "You feel better now, do you not?"

"Better, yes, Miss Childersleigh, thanks to you." And he tried to raise himself, only to fall back again.

"Indeed you had much better keep quiet; you see you are still very weak."

"Worse than weak, Miss Childersleigh, I greatly fear. I'm grieved to have startled you so terribly, but I did all for the best. I fancy I must have sprained my ankle badly in that fall. I would fain have kept it from you, but nature was too strong for me."

"And you walked on in your agony, never saying a word?"

"Not agony, only pain; and I thought it might have gone off, or I could have held out against it. I see I can't, and very sorry I am for your sake. Luckily we must have made a good bit of way towards the lower ground. Once on the heather and it's pretty nearly plain walking downhill, if you only persevere and take care of the bogs. Perhaps you'd better have my gun,—it's heavy, but it may help you so long as you keep to the stream, then you can throw it away—and my flask. God bless you, Miss Childersleigh, lose no time. You're drenched already, and it must be growing late. Only keep up a good heart, and good-by."

"You don't fancy for one moment I could desert you here?"

"I am certain you will, were it only for my sake. The very best thing you can do for me is to send me help."

"If I thought I could ever find it, heaven knows how gladly I would try. But no, if I left you once, I could never guide them back to where you are. Besides, my limbs would fail me, to a certainty, and I should only drop lower down. If we are to perish, better perish here. If a chance is left us, it is not to wander farther from where they are most likely to seek us." She had seated herself beside him as she was speaking. Rushbrook looked anxiously and searchingly in her face. It was very pale, and the features had a drawn, worn look; she was thoroughly exhausted.

"I believe she is right," he muttered. "It is physically impossible she should do it. Well, Miss Childersleigh," he went on aloud, "perhaps it is safer you should stay. They must certainly be looking for us by this time, and it is quite possible you might be wandering away from help. Here we can keep up each other's spirits till it comes. We cannot hope for a pleasant night, and God knows I would have done much to spare you the discomfort; but it might be worse and wetter," he added, with another desperate effort to take the sunny view of things.

Under his directions Maude searched about for some place that might give them better shelter, and she was lucky enough to find, hard by, a hollow in the gravel bank worn out by the winter floods. With its pebbly floor, and roof, it was comparatively dry. Thither he dragged himself, and there they cowered down, in a vague, dismal expectancy, a limitless horizon of gloom stretching all around them.

Externals, moreover, were depressing enough had their prospects been very much brighter. Maude cowered in the warmest nook in the cold den, but the dank vapours clutched at their throats, crept to their hearts, insisted on being taken to their bosoms, and chilled their very marrow. The plash and monotonous murmur of the stream made liquid melancholy. Once a black shape floated like a spirit of evil almost into their very refuge, and jerked out of it only slightly taken aback, to perch and croak upon the opposite rock. It seemed the demon of the mist, embodied in the evil-omened raven, come to gloat over his intended victims. Rushbrook could feel his companion take a fresh access of shuddering.

Yet through it all, and in his very sharp bodily pain, he did his best to bear himself up and her as well; still he made light of his accident, and jested as naturally as he could about the cold-water cure and wet compresses. She appreciated his kindness and his courage, but they had anything but the effect he intended. If he thought it worth while to affect to be in spirits, things must be black indeed; not that she did not make a brave fight herself against the gaining horrors, and with a success that surprised herself. But they thickened round her in spite of her, as time dragged past with his leaden feet. How slow he went they could only guess, for Rushbrook's repeater had stopped in the water. What looked like hours must have been nearer minutes.

Rushbrook's sprain kept him wakeful enough, but he felt Miss Childersleigh begin to nod on his shoulder, and at last she sunk into a dead slumber. At first he was inclined to be thankful for her temporary unconsciousness. Then the idea struck him—he did not understand much of these things, but he remembered sleep in snow meant death—that the slumber might be fatal. Soaked and chilled as she was, it could hardly be anything but dangerous. He shook her, at first gently, then more violently; as he felt the difficulty of awaking her, he became more roughly unceremonious. When he did succeed at last, he insisted on her raising herself to step up and down the shred of gravel before their refuge, to stir the blood that began to stagnate in her veins.

She obeyed, although the effort was intensely painful to her. Of a sudden she ceased it; as Rushbrook was going to remonstrate she silently laid her hand on his mouth. He, too, set himself to listen.

It was too good to be real! They could hardly trust their senses, but it was—yes, this time there could be no mistake—the faint, distant bark of a dog!

"A bark! a dog!" exclaimed Maude. "Oh, Lord Rushbrook, if they should only find us!"

Lord Rushbrook in turn pressed his fingers on her lips and waited. The minutes passed—the sound came nearer and nearer.

"A bay and a hound, Miss Childersleigh; and if McAlpine's blood-hound, Tamerlane, was at Baragoil, I'd swear to the voice. In any case they're running our trail, and you're saved, saved!"

The hysterical earnestness with which he spoke, the nervous eagerness with which he grasped her hand, told how much more gravely alarmed he had been for them than he had suffered to appear. As for Maude, she was sobbing aloud in her violent revulsion of feeling. The bay came nearer and nearer.

"Tamerlane I believe it is, and Providence has sent him," said Rushbrook, affecting not to remark her agitation, and falling back on commonplace, as the safest specific against possible hysterics. "Had I known he was come home to Baragoil, I should have been much inclined to have waited quietly where the fog caught us. But McAlpine seldom uses a dog after deer, and a few days ago he lent him to one of his cousins. How he should be here to-day I can't for the life of me guess." Maude was beginning to compose herself; her breath came more regularly, and the first use she made of it was to raise her voice and shout to the coming rescue.

"You need not tire yourself more, Miss Childersleigh; indeed you need not, they cannot miss us now. But shout by all means if it does you good. Evidently they're following us down the stream. It's just as well there was so little water in it, or even Tamerlane might have been thrown out."

A few minutes more, and a mighty hound, with open jowl and glaring eyeballs, half-strangled in a leash, and plaided human figures dripping like so many water-kelpies, disengaged themselves from the mist. They proved

a party in charge of the Baragoil keeper, one of three that were out upon the hills. But before they came up Maude had found time, and breath, and calm enough, to thank Lord Rushbrook in an outburst of heartfelt gratitude for the charge he had taken of her life and comforts at the risk and sacrifice of his own. Nor, although he affected to laugh and make light of it, telling her simple shame, if nothing else, must have kept him from running away, did he seriously set himself to disillusion her or to divert the warm current of her feelings. He seemed ungenerously satisfied to leave her believing herself deep in his debt. Deep, yet clamorous was the compassion, melodiously guttural the Gaelic ejaculations over the pitiful condition of the lady and the English lord. A light-footed runner was despatched forthwith to bring up ponies to the nearest practicable point. The pair were tenderly extricated from the gully, for fatigue and fright had made Maude well nigh as helpless as Rushbrook. "King's chairs" were improvised for their transport from the Highlanders' sinewy arms, but, willing as it was, their conveyance was slow enough at best. In the joy, however, of finding themselves back in safety and human society once more, all lesser discomforts passed for absolute luxuries.

Panniers filled with dry wraps which they revelled in, and provisions, for which they cared much less, met them with the ponies, and, deliberate as their movements had been, they found the news of their recovery had not yet recalled the other search parties. Not a male remained to garrison the lodge, and poor old Sir Basil, in frantic anxiety, was out with the rest of them on the hill. He returned to find his lost daughter deposited safely in bed, so we cannot assist at the interview between the pair. All we know is, the emotion with which he thanked Lord Rushbrook affected even that ordinarily impassive individual. Perhaps his lordship had been shaken by the day's work and his accident. Although he had absolutely refused to imitate Maude's example and retire to rest at once, yet with slight demur he yielded to Sir Basil's imperiously proffered hospitality, and consented to await his tedious cure under that gentleman's roof. Already an express was hurrying, at the utmost speed of man and horse, in search of the nearest doctor, who lived at a distance of only thirty-five miles. To say nothing of Rushbrook's ankle, Sir Basil was naturally seriously alarmed as to the shock his daughter's constitution might have received. His fears were happily relieved, and her constitution vindicated itself nobly; the young lady escaped for a couple of feverish nights, a heavy cold and a few days' confinement to her apartment. All the misery and mental anguish they had gone through notwithstanding, and very strange as it may appear, she and Rushbrook seemed to find morbid pleasure in going back on the incidents of that eventful day.

There were two men who could never bear to hear them alluded to. These were Sir Basil Childersleigh and his keeper. McLachlan could not forgive himself for having thrown over Miss Maude for the puppies, nor did he cease to regret that her rescue had been effected by other hands than his. He had scarcely joined the shooting-party when his experienced eye

read the sure signs of a coming fog. He imparted his gloomy forebodings to his *confrère* from Baragoil.

"You'll be getting to them before the mist yet if you be nimble," was that gentleman's reply; "but if you was to miss them, never you fash your thumb about it. Tamerlane came home to us this morning, and if we laid him on the scent to-morrow, he would run it from here to Conan Ferry."

McLachlan not only missed the objects of his quest, but, for the time being, lost himself. Then it was long before he and the Baragoil man groped their way to each other; but in the meantime Tamerlane had been thoughtfully sent for, on the chance of his services being wanted. As the old hound had an unpleasant instinct for rending the stranger he chased, McLachlan had reluctantly seen the leash that held him consigned to more familiar hands, while, to make assurance surer, he ranged the opposite side of the hill with another party. So it was to Tamerlane's unlooked-for return to his master's that Miss Childersleigh, in all probability, owed her life.

CHAPTER XXII.

Mr. Hemprigge breaks his Rule and makes a Confidence.

While far away in the country of Ossian his chiefs were leading the lives of the heroes of the mythical bard—hunting the hart and the grouse among cloud and storm, through heather and over precipices; sunning themselves after the toils of the chase in the smiles of beauty—Mr. Hemprigge was quietly following up his own personal game with the sharpness of the terrier, the staunchness of purpose of the sleuthhound. Childersleigh's genius away, his subordinate's talent indicated itself; his technical information, his unwavering earnestness, asserted their supremacy over colleagues who, in their visits to the establishment, had been accustomed to place themselves in the hands and think with the brain of its head. Hemprigge held in his fingers all the complex threads of its manifold transactions. He came to the meetings of the Board so thoroughly "posted up" in its figures: he had so clearly thought out to its consequences each suggestion he had to make; so carefully weighed beforehand all that might be urged for and against, that there was no taking him at a disadvantage. Those who risked a friendly fall with him in the way of discussion generally had cause to regret it. Yet with it all he was modesty itself; no man could say he read in his eye, far less gathered from his speech, any indiscreet consciousness of triumph. He was guilty of no ostentatious deference; simply where he could he reached his fallen opponent an unobtrusive hand, and quietly passing on to the matter next in hand, stated his views upon that with the same calm assurance of faultless information and unassailable logic. Candour itself, he made no monopoly of the knowledge he possessed, but offered himself, as in duty bound, a practical encyclopædia of the affairs of the

Company—an encyclopædia with the rare merit of being always in harmony with itself, open it at what page you would. Some of the directors left on duty had been disposed to regard him distrustfully, as an able adventurer, an edge-tool dangerous in any hands but the Governor's; nor had that distrust been altogether allayed by the parting counsels of Mr. Childersleigh, when he started for his holiday. Now they began to doubt whether these vague warnings as to the propriety of a careful supervision could have had any reference to the Managing Director.

"I'll tell you what I like about Hemprigge," observed Marxby one afternoon to Schwartzchild, as they left a Board meeting in company; "with all his thorough knowledge of the business, he sticks so closely by the Chairman's ideas in all he does or says." Schwartzchild hesitated.

"For my part I'm not sure but what Hemprigge may very easily carry that too far. Childersleigh's clever, but remember after all he's only gathering his experience as he goes; and there's many a wrinkle he could pick up from men like you or me or Hemprigge, who, I must say, goes heart and soul about his work. I'd just as soon Hemprigge didn't follow Childersleigh so blindly. That other 50,000*l.* to-day to the Smyrna Waterworks, for instance—I could see Hemprigge was far from clear himself about the wisdom of locking-up more money there. I am sure I am not. But he wouldn't speak for himself, he spoke for Childersleigh, and the loan's approved."

"Well, now, I'd much sooner stand by Childersleigh's judgment in a matter of that sort, sharp as Hemprigge is; depend upon it the other has the longer head of the two. The Chairman doesn't let our money go where he can't lay his hands on it if needful; and so long as Hemprigge knocks under to him, I'll knock under to Hemprigge."

"Humph!" growled Mr. Schwartzchild dubiously, as he nodded to Marxby and turned off in the opposite direction. Talent is pretty sure to find its level, and virtue sometimes meets its reward, even in this life. With all his loyalty and his modesty, already and in spite of himself, Hemprigge was recruiting partisans at the Board; wresting golden opinions even from the devoted admirers of his leader.

Mr. Hemprigge's was an excellently regulated mind, and although it divided its allegiance between love and mammon, those conflicting powers were constrained to compromise their mutual hold upon it. Love had no chance with its sterner rival in business hours; *en revanche*, away from Lothbury, it reigned pretty absolutely the lord of all. The moment Mr. Hemprigge gave his thoughts the reins, they careered away like winged steeds to seek his heart in the highlands. It seemed strange the tender passion should take so fast a grip of such a man without making him utterly its slave at all seasons. Had he an iron power of self-control he could exert at will; or was he happily gifted with a dual nature? How was it the cool, clear-headed manager of the Crédit Foncier of Turkey, who held steadily as ever by the main chance, suffered as by enchantment sudden demoralization as he passed out at its

portals? The threshold passed, he dropped his business-like burden of financial cares, but only to exchange it for another and a heavier one, tied up with the fancies of a penniless girl.

So it was, however, and his leisure moments found him not only the slave of love, but the prey of jealousy. If it was bad enough to picture the object of his attachment removed farther than ever from himself, it was still worse to know her within the reach of others. Why should the fruit that all his disinterested hopes were centred in seem less tempting to those who had it ever before their eyes, who possibly had but to stretch out their hands to pluck and to enjoy? The thought "working in his brain," came as near to conventional madness as it might be expected to do with a man accustomed to govern himself by the conventionalities. His hat was a shade less nicely brushed, the broad colours of his costume scarcely so artistically adjusted, the flowers had faded and fallen from his button-hole; above all, he took to shunning the circles he had adorned, and betook himself to solitary dinners and meditations. It was easy to see when he knitted his brow and fixed his gaze that he was rather scheming for the future than deploring the present. The friend he most laid himself out to cultivate now-a-days was Purkiss Childersleigh, and the two worthies saw a good deal of each other. Hemprigge went to dine not unfrequently with Purkiss, who was keeping solitary house at "The Cedars," returning the hospitality from time to time either at his rooms or at the "Sandringham," a club recently started, whose voucher for exclusiveness was its exorbitant entry money and subscription.

One evening he closed a fit of musing with a long-drawn breath, a sigh of relief, and a look of decision. "By Jove, I'll do it!" he muttered; "it can't hurt my showing him part of my hand, and I don't doubt I may bring him to help me." And next morning Purkiss found a message from his friend waiting him at "Childersleighs," with an invitation to dinner for the evening. Purkiss accepted, and went, and rather repented having gone. His entertainer—marvellous thing for him—was absent and inattentive, often talking at random, sometimes barely answering at all. Purkiss was irritated and showed his irritation. After all, he condescended when he stooped to be entertained by Mr. Hemprigge, and he had no idea of being repaid by slight.

"Good evening, Mr. Hemprigge," he broke out abruptly, when for full three minutes his host had been sitting in elaborate abstraction and speaking silence. "Good evening, I see I keep you from graver business or pleasanter company."

A more shrewd observer than the banker might have detected something of histrionic effect in the start with which the usually collected Hemprigge roused himself, in the expansive energy with which he cast himself on the starched bosom of his friend.

"God bless me! Childersleigh, what ever have I been doing? I feel I owe you a thousand apologies; I must have been treating you most shamefully, and making a miserable return for your charity in giving me your

society. Well, well," he went on, with a melancholy smile and most taking candour, while his drooping eye rested in stealthy steadiness on Purkiss, "as you ought to know, there's no man whose friendship I value half so much as yours, and I can't let you leave me under a misconception. Moreover, it's no use whatever trying to deceive your perspicuity; it's lost labour throwing dust in those sharp eyes of yours. You must see that I'm put out, and if you'll only consent to sit down again and listen to me, I'll make a clean breast of it."

Purkiss smoothed his ruffled brow, and with a bend of the head, intended to be half stately, half encouraging, resumed his seat.

"Yes, you've seen, of course, there's something bothering me, and there's no man I would sooner come to for help than yourself—help in the way of advice, I mean," he added hastily, for at the ominous word Purkiss had shied instinctively, like a horse being led up to a scarecrow. "Yet I don't fancy, clever as you are, Childersleigh, you'd ever guess the causes of my trouble."

Purkiss rapidly ran over in his mind all the probable misfortunes, from simple insolvency to an indictment for perjury, he could imagine as threatening his accomplished friend, and he flushed over his ears and forehead as he devoutly wished himself well out of his *rôle* of confidant.

"No, you'll never guess, so I may as well speak out at once. It's a woman, that's what it is."

"A woman!" Purkiss ejaculated hesitatingly, as doubting if he heard aright, while relief, astonishment, contempt chased themselves successively over his expressive countenance. The observant Hemprigge saw he had lowered himself, with a word, full 50 per cent. in his companion's esteem; but he read, too, in the air of genial abandonment with which that gentleman composed himself to listen, that he might be counted on more confidently up to a certain point now that he had been disabused of the dread of any excessive strain on his friendship.

"Yes, I've gone and fallen over head and ears in love, Childersleigh; and the girl has nothing, or next to nothing."

Purkiss stared upon his *vis-a-vis* open-eyed. Like most dull men he had a nervous horror of mystification, and this seemed a mystification, only too gross and palpable. Hitherto he had entertained a profound respect for Hemprigge's business qualities, and it shocked all his principles, shook his faith in human nature and everything else to its roots, to think of a model man of business falling in love at all. For himself, he could just as soon have imagined himself guilty of dropping on his knees on the Lombard Street pavements at high noon. And with a girl without money! Why, this very clever fellow must be touched in the brain: and here he was in the management of the company in which Purkiss had invested largely. His features were eloquent of puzzled uneasiness. Hemprigge, apparently lost in contemplation of the ringed fingers that were beating the devil's tattoo on the mahogany, had never taken his eyes off him for a moment.

"It doesn't sound rational," he proceeded; "looks much more like insanity than anything else, does it not? But you must suspend your sound judgment, Mr. Childersleigh, till you hear all. Then, possibly, it may not appear to you altogether so foolish."

"I am listening, Mr. Hemprigge," returned Mr. Childersleigh with judicial solemnity. The last three minutes, and the rude shock the one had given the other's respect, had well nigh undone the slow work of months, and already replaced the two gentlemen on their earlier footing of distant ceremony.

"You see, Mr. Childersleigh, a man in your position—in your great position," he added, seeing Purkiss sniff pleasantly at the incense, "need only look to a single point in marrying, and that, I need hardly say, is money." Purkiss nodded assentingly and approvingly.

"With a self-made man there are other things to be thought of—things, I mean, of course, that shall turn to money in the long run. I am a speculator by temperament, I admit it frankly; perhaps you will excuse me if I say there may be less able or lucky men." Hemprigge saw it was high time to assert himself a little, for Purkiss, visibly swelling up with importance, was already beginning to accept the other's humility much too complacently.

After a slight pause he went on—"In my opinion there's no more short-sighted fallacy of the short-sighted old school than its absurd principle that a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. A simple apology for dulness, rely on it. Take my own case. I could marry a woman to-morrow with 20,000*l.*—30,000*l.*—perhaps more, and what should I gain by it, pray? A net sum in cash and there an end, strictly tied up by settlement moreover. Why I can make the money for myself in a hand's turn, in two or three years at the outside. But if I marry for connection, trust me for changing the connection into position and credit, and I say it boldly, credit with me means pretty nearly unlimited means of helping myself and my friends as well." Thus reminded of his friend's money-making talents, Purkiss's manner inclined once more to the friendly and confidential.

"You took me aback at first, Hemprigge, I own; but after all there is sense in what you said, as indeed, I ought to have taken for granted. *You* could never dream of marrying for nothing—not such a fool. But may I venture to ask the lady's name?"

"I was just coming to that—Miss Winter."

"What! Lucy Winter, did you say?" Purkiss opened his eyes wider than ever. "And how or where in all the world do you look for either connection or credit there?"

"Come, come, Childersleigh, you don't affect not to see. Is she not a dependant of your family, the *protégée* and distant relative of Sir Basil Childersleigh—actually a member of his household? But let me tell you, if you don't know, that a connection like that may be made worth a very great deal to a man like me."

"Well, Hemprigge," returned Purkiss complacently, "doubtless you know best, and I suppose you understand your own business. If you overrate the value Miss Winter's position may be to you, that's your look-out. What I don't see, is why you should come to me for either help or advice in the matter. Your mind seems made up, and then, charming as Miss Winter may be, as you very justly remarked, she has not a shilling to bless herself with. You don't imagine she won't jump at an offer that settles her so comfortably for life."

"But that is just what I do imagine. Girls have their fancies. Your sister's friend may be excused for forgetting her own position."

"Perhaps my sister spoils her; I've often said she does; but although you are in love with her and I am not, yet I think better of her intelligence than you do. Depend upon it you've only to ask and to have," and Purkiss chuckled in his contented knowledge of the world.

"I wish I could think so, but I repeat that I don't."

"Surely you can't have been feeling your way already and failing," returned Purkiss, looking narrowly at him.

"No, no, nothing of that sort," rejoined Hemprigge hastily, and involuntarily dropping his eyes. "Only when a man's over eager about anything, he naturally gets anxious, I suppose, and I see difficulties."

"I don't. But you think I can do something for you, you say. Tell me how I may help you, and if I can I will."

"A thousand thanks, Childersleigh, for this new proof of your friendship! You give me fresh hope. I knew if I could get you on my side my cause would be half gained."

Mr. Childersleigh felt by no means so sanguine on that score as his friend. He did not overrate his influence in his family circle.

"With a fair field," Hemprigge proceeded slowly, "and thanks to your kind invitations to 'The Cedars,' I ought to win."

"A fair field! Why, who do you think is going to interfere with you? Do you mean my sister?"

"I did not allude to Miss Childersleigh just then, although I fear I scarcely stand so high in her good graces as I should wish to do."

"You don't fancy there are rivals in the case?" and Purkiss laughed unaffectedly. "Why, that would be the very insanity of jealousy, my good fellow, take my word for it."

Hemprigge said nothing.

"Oh, you have a rival then: for heaven's sake name him, and put me out of suspense, for I shall never guess. Perhaps it is my father, who prepares me a pleasant surprise in the shape of a mother-in-law. At least he is the only gentleman I know with a tender feeling for the lady whose opportunities are likely to make him dangerous."

Hemprigge did not seem altogether to appreciate the unwonted facetiousness of his friend, and answered gravely and rather sulkily,—

"There may be another, and one who knows how to improve his opportunities as well as most. What should you say to my worthy

chief? I for one don't undervalue Mr. Hugh Childersleigh's rivalry in love or anything else."

He had succeeded effectually in arresting Purkiss's attention now. That gentleman stared across at him in stupid amazement.

"Yes," Hemprigge went on deliberately, "I see I have surprised you, and I don't wonder at it. Mind, I don't say he means anything as yet; indeed I am quite certain he did not when I last saw them together. But I could see what he was blind to—that she was something less than indifferent to him—and who can tell me how things may be working round down there? He's the very man circumstances might tempt to a folly."

"Nonsense, Hemprigge; the last man in the world, *I* should say."

"Pardon me, Childersleigh, you don't know him. You have never had occasion to watch and study him as I have. He'll work and scheme, and scheme and work; then he is precisely the fellow to throw away everything for a woman and a fancy. What's that play—*All for Love, or the World Well Lost*. Worldly as he is, I can imagine Childersleigh the hero of a piece like that. I repeat I can figure circumstances that would make Miss Winter's position—she'd be as much of a drag on him as she would be a help to me—an irresistible temptation to him to defy and scandalize the world he seemed to live and labour for."

"Granting it to be possible, which I don't, you must know that nothing is more unlikely. You do Miss Winter injustice. I am sure she is far too shrewd to wait for miracles; she won't miss the shadow for the substance."

"You are so very sensible yourself, Childersleigh, you can't conceive other people doing foolish things. She has always had some romantic notion of what he did for her at the time old Miss Childersleigh died, and that confounded *grand seigneur* air of his is just the thing to fool a woman." To this Purkiss answered nothing. He sat abstracted, as Hemprigge had done earlier in the evening. These unexpected confidences had taken him aback and landed him in a dilemma. On the one hand there was nothing he would have liked better than to see Hugh compromise his brilliant reputation for sagacity and mar his great prospects by a foolish marriage, but with all the faith he felt in Hemprigge's perspicacity, the idea seemed at once too wild and pleasing ever to realize itself. On the other hand, if he could help Hemprigge to the lady, he should earn a gratitude which might show itself in many profitable ways: he should have the pleasure of paining Maude, who, however much she might dislike it, would scarcely take the responsibility of opposing herself to a match so eligible: and especially if there were any shadow of truth in Hemprigge's suspicions, the marriage could not fail to irritate Hugh intensely, although possibly at the cost of trouble between him and the Managing Director.——"However that's Hemprigge's own look-out," he thought; and then he added aloud,—

"Well, Hemprigge, whether or not you alarm yourself unnecessarily about Hugh, makes little difference to me. As I said, I am quite willing

to help you, if you only show me how. As it happens, I go down to Scotland in a day or two, so at any rate I can report how the land lies; and when my people return to town you must come often to 'The Cedars' and fight your own battle."

"The very thing I should have asked of you if I had dared. What I want is an opportunity to carry her before anything occurs to bring Childersleigh to know his own mind. Then I hope I may count on your influence with your father later if the young lady gives her assent."

"Certainly," mused Purkiss, absent again. "Look here, Hemprigge," he went on, after a pause, "I'll do something more for you if you like. Find an excuse and run down with me to Killoden. Arrange some urgent business for the benefit of my father and Hugh—tell the young lady what you please. Women like that sort of thing, they tell me; though, thank heaven, I don't pretend to know anything at all about it. Chivalrous and all that. Then strike while the iron's hot."

The pleasing hope of preparing a *mauvais coup* right and left, of doing an evil turn to his sister and kinsman, and arranging them a disagreeable surprise, was like an inspiration for Purkiss, wonderfully brightening his faculties.

"Eh—what? That would be a bold step indeed—too bold, I fear—and might give Childersleigh the alarm. He is so diabolically distrustful. Yet after all, he must know what I intend, sooner or later; and perhaps the sooner the better. He'll be the more unprepared. As for a pretext, I have a dozen excellent ones ready to my hand. He won't be deceived, I daresay; but I can't help that, we must risk something at every game."

Hemprigge had insensibly glided into an unfriendly tone in speaking of the absent chairman. It might be born of the thought of their possible rivalry; perhaps he felt it gave him his best hold on the sympathies of Purkiss.

"Yes, there are a good many matters that ought to be discussed quietly between us," he went on, gravely; "matters where my own judgment runs counter to what I suspect his to be, and much too complicated and delicate to be satisfactorily discussed by letter. You start, you say——"

"The evening of the day after to-morrow."

"As luck will have it, there's a meeting of the Board that very day, and a part of the proceedings shall be the arranging a satisfactory apology for my chief. Again a thousand thanks, Childersleigh; you shall not find me ungrateful. To Wednesday evening then, and at Euston Square."

TWO LADIES GLIDED INTO THE ROOM.

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

MAY, 1870.

Put Yourself in His Place.

CHAPTER XL.

DOCTOR AMBOYNE and Raby cried out, and tried to interfere; but Grace's movement was too swift, furious, and sudden; she was upon the man, with her stiletto high in the air, before they could get to her, and, indeed, the blow descended, and, inspired as it was, by love, and hate, and fury, would, doubtless, have buried the weapon in a rascal's body; but Jael Dence caught Grace's arm: that weakened, and also diverted the blow; yet the slight, keen weapon pierced Coventry's cheek, and even inflicted a slight wound upon the tongue. That very moment Jael Dence dragged her away, and held her round the waist, writhing and striking the air; her white hand and bridal sleeve sprinkled with her bridegroom's blood.

As for him, his love, criminal as it was, supplied the place of heroism: he never put up a finger in defence. "No," said he, despairingly, "let me die by her hand, it is all I hope for now." He even drew near her to enable her to carry out her wish: but, on that, Jael Dence wrenched

her round directly, and Doctor Amboyne disarmed her, and Raby marched between the bride and the bridegroom, and kept them apart: then they all drew their breath, for the first time, and looked aghast at each other.

Not a face in that room had an atom of colour left in it; yet it was not until the worst was over, that they realized the savage scene.

The bridegroom leaned against the wardrobe, a picture of despair, with blood trickling from his cheek, and channelling his white waistcoat and linen; the bride, her white and bridal sleeve spotted with blood, writhed feebly in Jael Dence's arms, and her teeth clicked together, and her eyes shone wildly. At that moment she was on the brink of frenzy.

Raby, a man by nature and equal to great situations, was the first to recover self-possession, and see his way. "Silence!" said he, sternly. "Amboyne, here's a wounded man, attend to him."

He had no need to say that twice: the Doctor examined his patient zealously, and found him bleeding from the tongue as well as the cheek; he made him fill his mouth with a constant supply of cold water, and applied cold water to the nape of his neck.

And now there was a knock at the door, and a voice inquired, rather impatiently, what they were about all this time. It was Mr. Carden's voice.

They let him in, but instantly closed the door. "Now, hush!" said Raby, "and let me tell him." He then, in a very few hurried words, told him the matter. Coventry hung his head lower and lower.

Mr. Carden was terribly shaken. He could hardly speak for some time. When he did, it was in the way of feeble expostulation. "Oh, my child! my child! what, would you commit murder?"

"Don't you see, I would," cried she, contemptuously, "sooner than *he* should do it, and suffer for it like a felon? You are all blind, and no friends of mine. I should have rid the earth of a monster, and they would never have hanged *me*. I hate you all, you worst of all, that call yourself my father, and drove me to marry this villain. One thing, you won't be always at hand to protect him."

"I'll give you every opportunity," said Coventry, doggedly. "You shall kill me for loving you so madly."

"She shall do no such thing," said Mr. Carden. "Opportunity? do you know her so little as to think she will ever live with you? Get out of my house, and never presume to set foot in it again. My good friends, have pity on a miserable father, and help me to hide this monstrous thing from the world."

This appeal was not lost: the gentlemen put their heads together, and led Coventry into another room. There Doctor Amboyne attended to him, while Mr. Carden went down and told his guests the bridegroom had been taken ill, so seriously indeed that anxiety and alarm had taken the place of joy.

The guests took the hint and dispersed, wondering and curious.

Meantime, on one side of a plaster wall Amboyne was attending the

bridegroom, and stanching the effusion of blood; on the other, Raby and Jael Dence were bringing the bride to reason.

She listened to nothing they could say until they promised her most solemnly, that she should never be compelled to pass a night under the same roof as Frederick Coventry. That pacified her not a little.

Doctor Amboyne had also great trouble with his patient: the wound in the cheek was not serious: but, by a sort of physical retribution—of which, by the by, I have encountered many curious examples—the tongue, that guilty part of Frederick Coventry, though slightly punctured, bled so persistently, that Amboyne was obliged to fill his mouth with ice, and, at last, support him with stimulants. He peremptorily refused to let him be moved from Woodbine Villa.

When this was communicated to Grace, she instantly exacted Raby's promise; and, as he was a man who never went from his word, he drove her and Jael to Raby Hall that very night, and they left Coventry in the villa, attended by a surgeon, under whose care Amboyne had left him with strict injunctions. Mr. Carden was secretly mortified at his daughter's retreat, but raised no objection.

Next morning, however, he told Coventry; and then Coventry insisted on leaving the house. "I am unfortunate enough," said he: "do not let me separate my only friend from his daughter."

Mr. Carden sent a carriage off to Raby Hall, with a note, telling Grace Mr. Coventry was gone of his own accord, and appeared truly penitent, and much shocked at having inadvertently driven her out of the house. He promised also to protect her, should Coventry break his word, and attempt to assume marital rights without her concurrence.

This letter found Grace in a most uncomfortable position. Mrs. Little had returned late to Raby Hall; but, in the morning, she heard from Jael Dence that Grace was in the house, and why?

The mother's feathers were up, and she could neither pity nor excuse. She would not give the unhappy girl a word of comfort. Indeed she sternly refused to see her. "No," said she: "Mrs. Coventry is unhappy; so this is no time to show her how thoroughly Henry Little's mother despises her."

These bitter words never reached poor Grace, but the bare fact of Mrs. Little not coming downstairs by one o'clock, nor sending a civil message, spoke volumes, and Grace was sighing over it, when her father's letter came. She went home directly, and so heart-broken, that Jael Dence pitied her deeply, and went with her, intending to stay a day or two only.

But, every day, something or other occurred, which combined with Grace's prayers to keep her at Woodbine Villa.

Mr. Coventry remained quiet for some days, by which means he pacified Grace's terrors.

On the fourth day, Mr. Beresford called at Woodbine Villa, and Grace received him, he being the curate of the parish.

He spoke to her in a sympathetic tone, which let her know at once he was partly in the secret. He said he had just visited a very guilty, but penitent man; that we all need forgiveness, and that a woman, once married, has no chance of happiness, but with her husband.

Grace maintained a dead silence, only her eye began to glitter.

Mr. Beresford, who had learned to watch the countenance of all those he spoke to, changed his tone immediately, from a spiritual to a secular adviser.

"If I were you," said he, in rather an off-hand way, "I would either forgive this man the sin into which his love has betrayed him, or I would try to get a divorce. This would cost money: but, if you don't mind expense, I think I could suggest a way——"

Grace interrupted him. "From whom did you learn my misery, and his villany? I let you in, because I thought you came from God; but you come from a villain. Go back, sir, and say that an angel, sent by him, becomes a devil in my eyes." And she rang the bell with a look that spoke volumes.

Mr. Beresford bowed, smiled bitterly, and went back to Coventry, with whom he had a curious interview, that ended in Coventry lending him two hundred pounds on his personal security. To dispose of Mr. Beresford for the present, I will add that, soon after this, his zeal for the poor subjected him to an affront. He was a man of soup-kitchens and subscriptions. One of the old fogies, who disliked him, wrote letters to *The Liberal*, and demanded an account of his receipts and expenditure in these worthy objects, and repeated the demand with a pertinacity that implied suspicion. Then Mr. Beresford called upon Doctor Fynes, and showed him the letters, and confessed to him that he never kept any accounts, either of public or private expenditure. "I can construe *Apollonius Rhodius*—with your assistance, sir,"—said he; "but I never could add up pounds, shillings and pence; far less divide them, except amongst the afflicted." "Take no notice of the cads," said Doctor Fynes. But Beresford represented meekly that a clergyman's value and usefulness were gone when once a slur was thrown upon him. Then Doctor Fynes gave him high testimonials, and they parted with mutual regret.

It took Grace a day to get over her interview with Mr. Beresford; and when, with Jael's help, she was calm again, she received a letter from Coventry, indited in tones of the deepest penitence, but reminding her that he had offered her his life, had made no resistance when she offered to take it, and never would.

There was nothing in the letter that irritated her; but she saw in it an attempt to open a correspondence.

She wrote back:—

"If you really repent your crimes, and have any true pity for the poor creature whose happiness you have wrecked, show it by leaving this place, and ceasing all communication with her."

This galled Coventry, and he wrote back:—

"What, leave the coast clear to Mr. Little? No, Mrs. Coventry; no."

Grace made no reply, but a great terror seized her, and from that hour preyed constantly on her mind—the fear that Coventry and Little would meet, and the man she loved would do some rash act, and perhaps perish on the scaffold for it.

This was the dominant sentiment of her distracted heart, when one day, at eleven A.M., came a telegram from Liverpool:—

"Just landed. Will be with you by four.

"HENRY LITTLE."

Jael found her shaking all over, with this telegram in her hand.

"Thank God you are with me," she gasped. "Let me see him once more, and die."

This was her first thought; but, all that day, she was never in the same mind for long together. She would burst out into joy that he was really alive, and she should see his face once more. Then she would cower with terror, and say she dared not look him in the face, she was not worthy. Then she would ask wildly, who was to tell him? What would become of him?

"It would break his heart, or destroy his reason."

"After all he had done and suffered for her!"

Oh! why could not she die before he came? Seeing her dead body, he would forgive her. She should tell him she loved him still, should always love him. She would withhold no comfort. Perhaps he would kill her. If so, Jael must manage so that he should not be taken up or tormented any more, for such a wretch as she was.

But I might as well try to dissect a storm, and write the gusts of a tempest, as to describe all the waves of passion in that fluctuating and agonized heart: the feelings and the agitation of a life were crowded into those few hours, during which she awaited the lover she had lost.

At last, Jael Dence, though she was also much agitated and perplexed, decided on a course of action. Just before four o'clock, she took Grace upstairs, and told her she might see him arrive: but she must not come down, until she was sent for. "I shall see him first, and tell him all: and, when he is fit to see you, I will let you know."

Grace submitted, and even consented to lie down for half-an-hour. She was, now in truth, scarcely able to stand, being worn out with the mental struggle. She lay passive, with Jael Dence's hand in hers.

When she had lain so about an hour, she started up suddenly, and the next moment a fly stopped at the door. Henry Little got out at the gate, and walked up the gravel to the house.

Grace looked at him from behind the curtain, gazed at him till he

disappeared, and then turned round, with seraphic joy on her countenance. "My darling!" she murmured; "more beautiful than ever! O misery! misery!"

One moment her heart was warm with rapture, the next it was cold with despair. But the joy was blind love; the despair was reason.

She waited, and waited, but no summons came.

She could not deny herself the sound of his voice. She crept down the stairs, and into her father's library; separated only by thin folding-doors from the room where Henry Little was with Jael Dence.

Meantime Jael Dence opened the door to Henry Little, and, putting her finger to her lips, led him into the dining-room, and shut the door.

Now, as his suspicions were already excited, this reception alarmed him seriously. As soon as ever they were alone, he seized both Jael's hands, and, looking her full in the face, said:—

"One word —— is she alive?"

"She is."

"Thank God! Bless the tongue that tells me that. My good Jael! my best friend!" And, with that, kissed her heartily on both cheeks.

She received this embrace like a woman of wood; a faint colour rose, but retired directly, and left her cheek as pale as before.

He noticed her strange coldness, and his heart began to quake.

"There is something the matter?" he whispered.

"There is."

"Something you don't like to tell me?"

"Like to tell you! I need all my courage, and you yours."

"Say she is alive, once more."

"She is alive, and not likely to die: but she does not care to live now. They told her you were dead: they told her you were false: appearances were such she had no chance not to be deceived. She held out for a long time; but they got the better of her—her father is much to blame—she is—married."

"Married!

"Yes!"

"Married!" He leaned, sick as death, against the mantelpiece, and gasped so terribly that Jael's fortitude gave way, and she began to cry.

After a long time, he got a word or two out in a broken voice.

"The false—inconstant—wretch! O heaven! what I have done and suffered for her—and now married!—married! And the earth doesn't swallow her, nor the thunder strike her! Curse her, curse her husband, curse her children; may her name be a by-word for shame and misery——"

"Hush! hush! or you will curse your own mad tongue. Hear all, before you judge her."

"I have heard all; she is a wife; she shall soon be a widow. Thought I was false! What business had she to think I was false? It

is only false hearts that suspect true ones. She thought me dead? Why? Because I was out of sight. She heard there was a dead hand found in the river. Why didn't she go and see it? Could all creation pass another hand off on me for hers? No; for I loved her. She never loved me."

"She loved you; and loves you still. When that dead hand was found, she fell swooning, and lay at death's door for you, and now she has stained her hands with blood for you. She tried to kill her husband, the moment she found you were alive and true, and he had made a fool of her."

"*Tried* to kill him! Why didn't she do it? I should not have failed at such work. I love her."

"Blame me for that: I stopped her arm, and I am stronger than she is. I say she is no more to blame than you. You have acted like a madman, and she suffers for it. Why did you slip away at night, like that, and not tell me?"

"I left letters to you and her, and other people besides."

"Yes, left them, and hadn't the sense to post them. Why didn't you *tell* me? Had ever any young man as faithful and true a friend in any young woman as you had in me? Many a man has saved a woman's life, but it isn't often that a woman fights for a man, and gets the upper hand: yet you gave me nothing in return; not even your confidence. Look the truth in the face, my lad: all your trouble, and all hers, comes of your sneaking out of Hillsborough in that daft way, without a word to me, the true friend, that was next door to you: which I nearly lost my life by your fault; for, if you had told me, I should have seen you off, and so escaped a month's hospital, and other troubles that almost drove me crazy. Don't you abuse that poor young lady before me, or I shan't spare you. She is more to be pitied than you are. Folk should look at home for the cause of their troubles: her misery, and yours, it is all owing to your own folly and ingratitude: ay, you may look; I mean what I say—ingratitude."

The attack was so sudden and powerful, that Henry Little was staggered and silenced; but an unexpected defender appeared on the scene: one of the folding-doors was torn open, and Grace darted in.

"How dare you say it is his fault, poor ill-used angel! No, no, no, no; I am the only one to blame. I didn't love you as you deserved. I tried to die for you; and *failed*. I tried to kill that monster for you; and *failed*. I am too weak and silly; I shall only make you more unhappy. Give me one kiss, my own darling, and then kill me out of the way." With this she was over his knees, and round his neck in a moment, weeping, and clutching him with a passionate despair, that melted all his anger away, and soon his own tears fell on her like rain.

"Ah, Grace! Grace!" he sobbed, "how could you? how could you?"

"Don't speak unkindly to her," cried Jael, "or she won't be alive a day. She is worse off than you are; and so is he too."

"You mock me: he is her husband. He can make her live with him. He can——" Here he broke out cursing and blaspheming, and called Grace a viper, and half thrust her away from him with horror, and his face filled with jealous anguish; he looked like a man dying of poison.

Then he rose to his feet, and said, with a sort of deadly calm, "Where can I find the man?"

"Not in this house, you may be sure," said Jael: "nor in any house where she is."

Henry sank into his seat again, and looked amazed.

"Tell him all," said Grace. "Don't let him think I do not love him at all."

"I will," said Jaël. "Well, the wedding was at eleven; your letter came at half-past twelve, and I took it her. Soon after that, the villain came to her, and she stabbed him directly with this stiletto. Look at it; there's his blood upon it: I kept it to show you. I caught her arm, or she would have killed him, I believe. He lost so much blood, the doctor would not let him be moved. Then she thought of you still, and would not pass a night under the same roof with him; at two o'clock she was on the way to Raby: but Mr. Coventry was too much of a man to stay in the house and drive her out; so he went off next morning, and, as soon as she heard that, she came home. She is wife and no wife, as the saying is, and how it is all to end, heaven only knows."

"It will end the moment I meet the man: and that won't be long."

"There! there!" cried Grace, "that is what I feared. Ah, Jael! Jael! why did you hold my hand? They would not have hung *me*. I told you so at the time: I knew what I was about."

"Jael," said the young man, "of all the kind things you have done for me, that was the kindest. You saved my poor girl from worse trouble than she is now in. No, Grace; you shall not dirty your hand with such scum as that: it is my business, and mine only."

In vain did Jael expostulate, and Grace implore. In vain did Jael assure him that Coventry was in a worse position than himself, and try to make him see that any rash act of his would make Grace even more miserable than she was at present. He replied that he had no intention of running his neck into a halter; he should act warily, like the Hillsborough trades, and strike his blow so cunningly, that the criminal should never know whence it came. "I've been in a good school for homicide," said he; "and I am an inventor. No man has ever played the executioner so ingeniously as I will play it. Think of all this scoundrel has done to me: he owes me a dozen lives, and I'll take one. Man shall never detect me: God knows all, and will forgive me, I hope. If He doesn't, I can't help it."

He kissed Grace again and again, and comforted her; said she was not to blame; honest people were no match for villains: if she had been twice as simple, he would have forgiven her at sight of the stiletto; that cleared her, in his mind, better than words.

He was now soft and gentle as a lamb. He begged Jael's pardon humbly, for leaving Hillsborough without telling her. He said he had gone up to her room; but all was still; and he was a working man, and the sleep of a working woman was sacred to him—(he would have awakened a fine lady, without ceremony). He assured her he had left a note for her in his box, thanking and blessing her for all her goodness. He said that he hoped he might yet live to prove by acts, and not by idle words, how deeply he felt all she had done and suffered for him.

Jael received these excuses in hard silence. "That is enough about me," said she, coldly. "If you are grateful to me, show it by taking my advice. Leave vengeance to Him who has said that vengeance is His."

The man's whole manner changed directly, and he said doggedly,—

"Well, I will be His instrument."

"He will choose his own."

"I'll lend my humble co-operation."

"Oh, do not argue with him," said Grace, piteously. "When did a man ever yield to our arguments? Dearest, I can't argue: but I am full of misery, and full of fears. You see my love; you forgive my folly. Have pity on me; think of my condition: do not doom me to live in terror by night and day: have I not enough to endure, my own darling? There, promise me you will do nothing rash to-night, and that you will come to me the first thing to-morrow. Why, you have not seen your mother yet; she is at Raby Hall."

"My dear mother!" said he: "it would be a poor return for all your love, if I couldn't put off looking for that scum till I have taken you in my arms."

And so Grace got a reprieve.

They parted in deep sorrow, but almost as lovingly as ever, and Little went at once to Raby Hall, and Grace, exhausted by so many emotions, lay helpless on a couch in her own room all the rest of the day.

For some time she lay in utter prostration, and only the tears that trickled at intervals down her pale cheeks showed that she was conscious of her miserable situation.

Jael begged and coaxed her to take some nourishment: but she shook her head with disgust at the very idea.

For all that, at nine o'clock, her faithful friend almost forced a few spoonfuls of tea down her throat, feeding her like a child: and, when she had taken it, she tried to thank her, but choked in the middle, and, flinging her arm round Jael's neck, burst into a passion of weeping, and incoherent cries of love, and pity, and despair. "Oh, my darling! so great! so noble! so brave! so gentle! And I have destroyed us both! He forgave me, as soon as he *saw* me. So terrible, so gentle! What will be the next calamity? Ah Jael! save him from that rash act, and I shall never complain; for he was dead, and is alive again."

"We will find some way to do that between us, you, and I, and his mother."

"Ah, yes: she will be on my side, in that. But she will be hard upon me. She will point out all my faults; my execrable folly. Ah, if I could but live my time over again, I'd pray night and day for selfishness. They teach us girls to pray for this and that virtue, which we have too much of already; and what we ought to pray for is selfishness. But no! I must think of my father, and think of that hypocrite; but the one person whose feelings I was too mean, and base, and silly to consult, was myself. I always abhorred this marriage. I feared it, and loathed it; yet I yielded step by step, for want of a little selfishness: we are slaves without it, mean, pitiful, contemptible slaves. O God, in mercy give me selfishness! Ah me, it is too late now. I am a lost creature; nothing is left me but to die."

Jael got her to bed, and sleep came at last to her exhausted body; but, even when her eyes were closed, tears found their way through the lids, and wetted her pillow.

So can great hearts, and loving natures suffer.

Can they enjoy in proportion?

Let us hope so. But I have my doubts.

Henry Little kept his word, and came early next morning. He looked hopeful and excited: he said he had thought the matter over, and was quite content to let that scoundrel live; and even to dismiss all thought of him, if Grace really loved him.

"If I love you!" said Grace. "Oh, Henry, why did I ask you to do nothing rash, but that I love you? Why did I attempt his life myself? because you said in your letter —— It was not to revenge myself, but to save you from more calamity. Cruel, cruel! Do I love him?"

"I know you love me, Grace: but do you love me enough? Will you give up the world for me, and let us be happy together, the only way we can? My darling Grace, I have made our fortune; all the world lies before us; I left England alone, for you; now leave it with me, and let us roam the world together."

"Henry!—what!—when I cannot be your wife!"

"You can be my wife; my wife in reality, as you are his in name and nothing else. It is idle to talk as if we were in some ordinary situation. There are plenty of countries that would disown such a marriage as yours, a mere ceremony obtained by fraud, and cancelled by a stroke with a dagger and instant separation. Oh, my darling, don't sacrifice both our lives to a scruple that is out of place here. Don't hesitate; don't delay. I have a carriage waiting outside; end all our misery by one act of courage, and trust yourself to me; did I ever fail you?"

"For shame, Henry, for shame!"

"It is the only way to happiness. You were quite right; if I kill that wretch we shall be parted in another way, always parted; now we can be together for life. Remember, dearest, how I begged you in this very room to go to the United States with me: you refused: well, have you never been sorry you refused? Now I once more implore you to be wise and brave, and love me as I love you. What is the world to us? You are all the world to me."

"Answer him, Jael, oh answer him!"

"Nay, these are things every woman must answer for herself."

"And I'll take no answer but yours." Then he threw himself at her feet, and clasping her in his arms, implored her, with all the sighs and tears and eloquence of passion, to have pity on them both, and fly at once with him.

She writhed and struggled faintly, and turned away from him, and fell tenderly towards him, by turns, and still he held her tight, and grew stronger, more passionate, more persuasive, as she got weaker and almost faint. Her body seemed on the point of sinking, and her mind of yielding.

But all of a sudden she made a desperate effort. "Let me go," she cried. "So this is your love! With all my faults and follies, I am truer than you. Shame on your love that would dishonour the creature you love. Let me go, sir, I say, or I shall hate you worse than I do the wretch whose name I bear."

He let her go directly, and then her fiery glance turned to one long lingering look of deep but tender reproach, and she fled sobbing.

He sank into a chair, and buried his face in his hands.

After a while, he raised his head, and saw Jael Dence looking gravely at him.

"Oh, speak your mind," said he, bitterly.

"You are like the world. You think only of yourself: that's all I have to say."

"You are very unkind to say so. I think for us both: and she will think with me, in time. I shall come again to-morrow."

He said this with an iron resolution that promised a long and steady struggle, to which Grace, even in this first encounter, had shown herself hardly equal.

Jael went to her room, expecting to find her as much broken down as she was by Henry's first visit; but, instead of that, the young lady was walking rapidly to and fro.

At sight of Jael, she caught her by the hand, and said, "Well!"

"He is coming again to-morrow."

"Is he sorry?"

"Not he."

"Who would have thought he was so wicked?"

This seemed rather exaggerated to Jael; for with all Mrs. Little's

teaching she was not quite a lady yet in all respects, though in many things she was always one by nature. "Let it pass," said she.

"It is a man's part to try,
And a woman's to deny."

"And how often shall I have to deny him I love so dearly?"

"As often as he asks you to be his mistress; for, call it what you like, that is all he has to offer you."

Grace hid her face in her hands.

Jael coloured. "Excuse my blunt speaking; but sometimes the worst word is the best: fine words are just words with a veil on."

"Will he dare to tempt me again, after what I said?"

"Of course he will: don't you know him? he never gives in. But, suppose he does, you have your answer ready."

"Jael," said Grace, "you are so strong, it blinds you to my weakness. I resist him, day after day! I, who pity him so, and blame myself! Why his very look, his touch, his voice, overpower me so that my whole frame seems dissolving: feel how I tremble at him, even now. No, no; let those resist who are sure of their strength. Virtue, weakened by love and pity, has but one resource—to fly. Jael Dence, if you are a woman, help me to save the one thing I have got left to save."

"I will," said Jael Dence.

In one hour from that time they had packed a box, and a carpet-bag, and were on their way to a railway-station. They left Hillsborough.

In three days Jael returned, but Grace Coventry did not come back with her.

The day after that trying scene, Henry Little called, not to urge Grace again, as she presumed he would, but to ask pardon: at the same time we may be sure of this, that, after a day or two spent in obtaining pardon, the temptation would have been renewed, and so on for ever. Of this, however, Little was not conscious; he came to ask pardon, and offer a pure and patient love, till such time as heaven should have pity on them both. He was informed that Mrs. Coventry had quitted Hillsborough, and left a letter for him. It was offered him, he snatched it and read it:—

"My own dear Henry,—

"You have given me something to forgive, and I forgive you without asking, as I hope you will one day forgive me. I have left Hillsborough, to avoid a situation that was intolerable, and solicitations which I blushed to hear, and for which you would one day have blushed too. This parting is not for ever, I hope; but that rests with yourself. Forego your idea of vengeance on that man, whose chastisement you would best alleviate by ending his miserable existence; and learn to love me honourably and patiently, as I love you. Should you obtain this

great victory over yourself, you will see me again. Meantime, think of her who loves you to distraction, and whose soul hovers about you unseen. Pray for me, dear one, at midnight, and at eight o'clock every morning; for those are two of the hours I shall pray for you. Do you remember the old church, and how you cried over me? I can write no more: my tears blind me so. Farewell.

"Your unhappy

"Grace."

Little read this piteous letter, and it was a heavy blow to him; a blow that all the tenderness shown in it could not at first soften. She had fled from him; she shunned him. It was not from Coventry she fled; it was from him.

He went home cold, and sick at heart, and gave himself up to grief and deep regrets for several days.

But soon his powerful and elastic mind, impatient of impotent sorrow, and burning for some kind of action, seized upon vengeance as the only thing left to do.

At this period he looked on Coventry as a beast in human shape, whom he had a moral right to extinguish; only, as he had not a legal right, it must be done with consummate art. He trusted nobody; spoke to nobody; but set himself quietly to find out where Coventry lived, and what were his habits. He did this with little difficulty. Coventry lodged in a principal street; but always dined at a club, and returned home late, walking through a retired street or two; one of these passed by the mouth of a narrow court that was little used.

Little, disguised as a workman, made a complete reconnaissance of this locality, and soon saw that his enemy was at his mercy.

But, while he debated within himself what measure of vengeance he should take, and what noiseless weapon he should use, an unseen antagonist baffled him. That antagonist was Grace Carden. Still foreboding mischief, she wrote to Mr. Coventry, from a town two hundred miles distant:—

"Whatever you are now, you were born a gentleman, and will, I think, respect a request from a lady you have wronged. Mr. Little has returned, and I have left Hillsborough; if he encounters you in his despair, he will do you some mortal injury. This will only make matters worse, and I dread the scandal that will follow; and to hear my sad story in a court of law as a justification for his violence. Oblige me, then, by leaving Hillsborough for a time, as I have done."

On receipt of this, Coventry packed up his portmanteau directly, and, leaving Lally behind to watch the town, and see whether this was a ruse, he went directly to the town whence Grace's letter was dated, and to the very hotel.

This she had foreseen and intended.

He found she had been there, and had left for a neighbouring watering-place: he followed her thither, and there she withdrew the clue; she left word she was gone to Stirling; but doubled on him, and soon put hundreds of miles between them. He remained in Scotland, hunting her.

Thus she played the grey plover with him she hated, and kept the beloved hands from crime.

When Little found that Coventry had left Hillsborough, he pretended to himself that he was glad of it. "My darling is right," said he. "I will obey her, and do nothing contrary to law. I will throw him into prison, that is all." With these moderated views, he called upon his friend Ransome, whom of course he had, as yet, carefully avoided, to ask his aid in collecting the materials for an indictment. He felt sure that Coventry had earned penal servitude, if the facts could only be put in evidence. He found Ransome in low spirits, and that excellent public servant being informed what he was wanted for, said drily, "Well, but this will require some ability: don't you think your friend Silly Billy would be more likely to do it effectually than John Ransome?"

"Why, Ransome, are you mad?"

"No, I merely do myself justice. Silly Billy smelt that faulty grindstone; and I can't smell a rat a yard from my nose, it seems. You shall judge for yourself. There have been several burglaries in this town, of late, and planned by a master. This put me on my mettle, and I have done all I could, with my small force, and even pried about in person, night after night, and that is not exactly my business, but I felt it my duty. Well, sir, two nights ago, no more, I had the luck to come round a corner right upon a job: Alderman Dick's house, full of valuables, and the windows well guarded; but one of his cellars is only covered with a heavy wooden shutter, bolted within. I found this open, and a board wedged in, to keep it ajar: down I went on my knees, saw a light inside, and heard two words of thieves' latin; that was enough, you know; I whipped out the board, jumped on the heavy shutter, and called for the police."

"Did you expect them to come?"

"Not much. These jobs are timed so as not to secure the attendance of the police. But assistance of another kind came; a gentleman full dressed, in a white tie and gloves, ran up, and asked me what it was. 'Thieves in the cellar,' said I, and shouted police, and gave my whistle. The gentleman jumped on the shutter. 'I can keep that down,' said he. 'I'm sure I saw two policemen in Acorn Street: run quick;' and he showed me his sword-cane, and seemed so hearty in it, and confident, I ran round the corner, and gave my whistle. Two policemen came up; but, in that moment, the swell accomplice had pulled all his pals out of the cellar, and all I saw of the lot, when I came back, was the swell's swallow-tail coat flying like the wind towards a back slum, where

I and my bobbies should have been knocked on the head, if we had tried to follow him; but indeed he was too fleet to give us the chance."

"Well," said Henry, "that was provoking: but who can foresee everything all in a moment? I have been worse duped than that a good many times."

Ransome shook his head. "An old officer of police, like me, not to smell a swell accomplice. I had only to handcuff that man, and set him down with me on the shutter, till, in the dispensation of Providence, a bobby came by."

He added by way of corollary,—"You should send to London for a detective."

"Not I," said Henry. "I know you for a sagacious man, and a worthy man, and my friend. I'll have no one to help me in it but you."

"Won't you?" said Ransome. "Then I'll go in. You have done me good, Mr. Little, by sticking to a defeated friend like this. Now for your case: tell me all you know, and how you know it."

Henry complied, and Ransome took his notes. Then he said, he had got some old memoranda by him, that might prove valuable: he would call in two days.

He did call, and showed Henry Coventry's card, and told him he had picked it up close by his letter-box, on the very night of the explosion. "Mark my words, this will expand into something," said the experienced officer.

Before he left, he told Henry that he had now every reason to believe the swell accomplice was Shifty Dick, the most successful and distinguished criminal in England. "I have just got word from London that he has been working here, and has collared a heavy swag; says he will go into trade: one of his old pals let that out in gaol. Trade! then heaven help his customers, that is all."

"You may catch him yet."

"When I catch Jack-a-lantern. He is not so green as to stay a day in Hillsborough, now his face has been close to mine: they all know I never forget a face. No, no; I shall never see him again, till I am telegraphed for, to inspect his mug and his wild-cat eyes in some gaol or other. I must try and not think of him; it disturbs my mind, and takes off my attention from my duties.

Ransome adhered to this resolution for more than a month, during which time he followed out every indication with the patience of a beagle; and, at last, he called one day, and told Little, Hill had forfeited his bail, and gone to Canada at the expense of the trade; but had let out strange things before he left. There was a swell concerned in his attempt with the bow and arrow: there was a swell concerned in the explosion, with some workman, whose name he concealed; he had seen them on the bridge, and had seen the workman receive a bag of gold, and had collared him, and demanded his share; this had been given him, but not until he threatened to call the bobbies. "Now, if we could find Hill, and get him

to turn Queen's evidence, this, coupled with what you and I could furnish, would secure your man ten years of penal servitude. I know an able officer at Quebec. Is it worth while going to the expense?"

Little, who had received the whole communication in a sort of despondent, apathetic way, replied that he didn't think it was worth while. "My good friend," said he, "I am miserable. Vengeance, I find, will not fill a yearning heart. And the truth is, that all this time I have been secretly hoping she would return, and that has enabled me to bear up, and chatter about revenge. Who could believe a young creature like that would leave her father and all her friends for good? I made sure she would come back in a week or two. And to think that it is I who have driven her away, and darkened my own life. I thought I had sounded the depths of misery. I was a fool to think so. No, no; life would be endurable if I could only see her face once a day, and hear her voice, though it was not even speaking to me. Oh! oh!"

Now this was the first time Little had broken down before Ransome. Hitherto, he had spoken of Coventry, but not of Grace; he had avoided speaking of her, partly from manly delicacy, partly because he foresaw his fortitude would give way, if he mentioned her.

But now the strong man's breast seemed as if it would burst, and his gasping breath, and restless body, betrayed what a price he must have paid for the dogged fortitude he had displayed for several weeks, love-sick all the time.

Ransome was affected: he rose, and walked about the room, ashamed to look at a Spartan broken down.

When he had given Little time to recover some little composure, he said, "Mr. Little, you were always too much of a gentleman to gossip about the lady you love; and it was not my business to intrude upon that subject; it was too delicate. But, of course, with what I have picked up here and there, and what you have let drop, without the least intending it, I know pretty well how the land lies. And, sir, a man does not come to my time of life without a sore and heavy heart; if I was to tell you how I came to be a bachelor —— but, no; even after ten years, I could not answer for myself. All I can say is that, if you should do me the honour to consult me on something that is nearer your heart than revenge, you would have all my sympathy, and all my zeal."

"Give me your hand, old fellow," said Little, and broke down again.

But, this time, he shook it off quickly, and, to encourage him, Mr. Ransome said, "To begin, you may take my word Mr. Carden knows, by this time, where his daughter is. Why not sound him on the matter?"

Henry acted on this advice, and called on Mr. Carden.

He was received very coldly by that gentleman.

After some hesitation he asked Mr. Carden if he had any news of his daughter.

"I have."

The young man's face was irradiated with joy directly.

"Is she well, sir?"

"Yes."

"Is she happier than she was?"

"She is content."

"Has she friends about her? Kind, good people; any persons of her own sex, whom she can love?"

"She is among people she takes for angels, at present. She will find them to be petty, mean, malicious devils. She is in a Protestant convent."

"In a convent? Where?"

"Where? Where neither the fool nor the villain, who have wrecked her happiness between them, and robbed me of her, will ever find her. I expected this visit, sir; the only thing I doubted was which would come first, the villain or the fool? The fool has come first, and, being a fool, expects *me* to tell him where to find his victim, and torture her again. Begone, fool, from the house you have made desolate by your execrable folly in slipping away by night like a thief, or rather like that far more dangerous animal, a fool."

The old man delivered these insults with a purple face, and a loud fury, that in former days would have awakened corresponding rage in the fiery young fellow. But affliction had tempered him, and his insulter's hairs were grey.

He said, quietly, "You are her father. I forgive you these cruel words." Then he took his hat, and went away.

Mr. Carden followed him to the passage, and cried after him, "The villain will meet a worse reception than the fool. I promise you that much."

Little went home despondent, and found a long letter from his mother, telling him he must dine and sleep at Raby Hall that day.

She gave him such potent reasons, and showed him so plainly his refusal would infuriate his uncle, and make her miserable, that he had no choice. He packed up his dress suit, and drove to Raby Hall, with a heavy heart, and bitter reluctance.

O cæca mens hominum!

CHAPTER XLI.

It was the great anniversary. On that day Sir Richard Raby had lost for the Stuarts all the head he possessed. His faithful descendant seized the present opportunity to celebrate the event with more pomp than ever. A month before the fatal day he came in from Hillsborough with sixty yards of violet-coloured velvet, the richest could be got from Lyons: he put this down on a table, and told his sister that was for her and Jael to wear on the coming anniversary. "Don't tell me there's not enough," said he; "for I inquired how much it would take to carpet two small rooms, and bought it; now what will carpet two little libraries will clothe two large ladies; and you are neither of you shrimps."

While he was thus doing the cynical, nobody heeded him: quick and skilful fingers were undoing the parcel, and the ladies' cheeks flushed, and their eyes glistened, and their fingers felt the stuff inside and out; in which occupation Raby left them, saying, "Full dress, mind! We Rabys are not beheaded every day."

Mrs. Little undertook to cut both dresses, and Jael was to help sew them.

But, when they came to be tried on, Jael was dismayed. "Why, I shall be half naked," said she. "Oh, Mrs. Little, I couldn't: I should sink with shame."

Mrs. Little pooh-poohed that, and an amusing dialogue followed between these two women, both of them equally modest, but one hardened, and perhaps a little blinded, by custom.

Neither could convince the other, but Mrs. Little overpowered Jael by saying, "I shall wear mine low, and you will mortally offend my brother if you don't."

Then Jael succumbed, but looked forward to the day with a simple terror one would hardly have expected from the general strength of her character.

Little arrived and saw his mother for a minute or two before dinner. She seemed happy and excited, and said, "Cheer up, darling, we will find a way to make you happy. Mark my words, a new era in your life dates from to-day: I mean to open your eyes to-night. There, don't question me, but give me one kiss and let us go and make ourselves splendid for poor Sir Richard."

When Little came downstairs he found his uncle and a distinguished-looking young gentleman standing before the fire: both were in full dress. Raby had the Stuart orders on his breast, and looked a prince. He introduced Little to Mr. Richard Raby with high formality; but, before they had time to make acquaintance, two ladies glided into the room, and literally dazzled the young men, especially Dissolute Dick, who knew neither of them.

Mrs. Little, with her oval face, black brow and hair, and stately but supple form, was a picture of matronly beauty and grace; her rich brunette skin, still glossy and firm, showed no signs of age; but under her glorious eyes, were the marks of trouble, and though her face was still striking and lovely, yet it revealed what her person concealed, that she was no longer young. That night she looked about eight-and-thirty.

The other lady was blonde, and had a face less perfect in contour, but beautiful in its way, and exquisite in colour and peach-like bloom: but the marvel was her form; her comely head, dignified on this occasion with a coronet of pearls, perched on a throat long yet white and massive, and smooth as alabaster; and that majestic throat sat enthroned on a

snowy bust and shoulders of magnificent breadth, depth, grandeur, and beauty. Altogether it approached the gigantic: but so lovely was the swell of the broad white bosom, and so exquisite the white and polished skin of the mighty shoulders adorned with two deep dimples, that the awe this grand physique excited was mingled with profound admiration.

Raby and Henry Little both started at the sudden grandeur and brilliance of the woman they thought they knew, but in reality had never seen her; and Raby, dazzled himself, presented her, quite respectfully, to Dissolute Dick.

"This is Miss Dence, a lady descended, like the rest of us, from poor Sir Richard; Miss Dence; Mr. Richard Raby."

Jael blushed more deeply than ladies with white and antique busts are in the habit of doing; and it was curious to see the rosy tint come on her white neck, and then die quietly away again. Yet she curtsied with grace and composure. (Mrs. Little had trained her at all points; and grace comes pretty readily, where nature has given perfect symmetry.)

Dinner was announced, and Raby placed the Dissolute between his sister and the magnificent Beauty dead Sir Richard had developed. He even gave a reason for this arrangement.

"All you ladies like a Rake: you *praise* sober fellows like me; but what you *prefer* is a Rake."

As they were rustling into their places, Mrs. Little said to Dick, with a delicious air of indifference, "*Are* you a rake, Mr. Raby?"

"I am anything you like," replied the shameless fellow.

All the old plate was out, and blazing in the light of candles innumerable.

There was one vacant chair.

Dick asked if there was anybody expected.

"Not much," said Raby drily. "That is Sir Richard's chair, on these occasions. However, he may be sitting in it now, for aught I know. I sincerely hope he is."

"If I thought that, I'd soon leave mine," said Jael, in a tremulous whisper.

"Then stay where you are, Sir Richard," said the Rake, making an affected motion with his handkerchief, as if to keep the good Knight down.

In short, this personage, being young, audacious, witty, and animated by the vicinity of the most beautiful creature he had ever seen, soon deprived the anniversary of that solemn character Mr. Raby desired to give it. Yet his volubility, his gaiety, and his chaff, were combined with a certain gentlemanlike tact and dexterity; and he made Raby laugh in spite of himself, and often made the ladies smile. But Henry Little sat opposite, and wondered at them all, and his sad heart became very bitter.

When they joined the ladies in the drawing-room, Henry made an effort to speak to Jael Dence. He was most anxious to know whether she

had heard from Grace Carden. But Jael did not meet him very promptly, and, while he was faltering out his inquiries, up came Richard Raby, and resumed his attentions to her: attentions that very soon took the form of downright love-making. In fact he stayed an hour after his carriage was announced, and, being a young man of great resolution, and accustomed to please himself, he fell over head and ears in love with Miss Dence; and showed it then and thereafter.

It did not disturb her composure. She had often been made love to, and could parry as well as Dick could fence.

She behaved with admirable good sense; treated it all as a polite jest, but not a disagreeable one.

Mrs. Little lost patience with them both. She drew Henry aside, and asked him why he allowed Mr. Richard Raby to monopolize her.

"How can I help it?" said Henry. "He is in love with her; and no wonder: see how beautiful she is, and her skin like white satin. She is ever so much bigger than I thought. But her heart is bigger than all. Who'd think she had ever condescended to grind saws with me?"

"Who indeed? And with those superb arms?"

"Why, that is it, mother; they are up to anything: it was one of those superb arms she flung round a blackguard's neck for me, and threw him like a sack; or I should not be here. Poor girl! Do you think that chatterbox would make her happy?"

"Heaven forbid! He is not worthy of her. No man is worthy of her, except the one I mean her to have, and that is yourself."

"Me, mother! are you mad?"

"No: you are mad, if you reject her. Where can you hope to find her equal? In what does she fail? In face? why it is comeliness, goodness, and modesty, personified. In person? why she is the only perfect figure I ever saw. Such an arm, hand, foot, neck, and bust, I never saw, all in the same woman. Is it sense? why she is wise beyond her years, and beyond her sex. Think of her great self-denial: she always loved you, yet aided you, and advised you to get that mad young thing you preferred to her—men are so blind in choosing women. Then think of her saving your life: and then how nearly she lost her own, through her love for you. Oh, Henry, if you cling to a married woman, and still turn away from that angelic creature there, and disappoint your poor mother again, whose life has been one long disappointment, I shall begin to fear you were born without a heart."

A Pupil of the Hôtel Rambouillet.

Marie-Madeleine Pioche de la Vergne was well known to her contemporaries under that designation. But the only title by which posterity will be likely to recognize her is that of the Countess de la Fayette, authoress of several novels, which had a considerable vogue in their day, and were written in a style, of which some declared Madame de la Fayette to be the originator, but which had merely been so long out of fashion as to seem brand-new when it came uppermost again on the "whirligig of Time." The same phenomenon has been witnessed before—and since.

The world to which Mademoiselle de la Vergne was well known was a very great world indeed. It was the world of balls, and fêtes, and carousels; of triumphal entries, and magnificent banquets; of brilliant ballets, comedies, and operas, wherein, if the august performers were a little *gauche* and untrained, yet the diamonds were real, and the gold lace bullion! In a word, it was the court-world of Paris, presided over by that be-periwigged Olympian Jupiter known to mortals as Louis le Grand, fourteenth of his name.

Marie-Madeleine Pioche de la Vergne was born in the year 1633. She was the daughter of Aymar de la Vergne, Governor of Havre-de-Grâce, and Marie de Pena, of an ancient Provençal family, which had produced several men celebrated in science and letters. The subject of the present paper counted among her ancestors Hugues de Pena, a writer of tragedies highly esteemed in their day, who received the poet's laurel from the hands of Queen Beatrix, wife of Charles of France, King of Naples, and Jean de Pena, a mathematician of high reputation.

Mademoiselle de la Vergne lost her father when she was fifteen years of age. Not very long after Aymar de la Vergne's death,—that is to say, towards the end of the year 1650,—his widow married again. Her second husband was the Chevalier Renaud de Sevigné, a Knight of Malta, who caused himself to be absolved from his vows in order to contract this alliance. Thus, through her stepfather, Mademoiselle de la Vergne became connected with Madame de Sevigné; for Renaud de Sevigné was uncle to the writer of the famous letters, and the intimacy between these two distinguished women ripened into a life-long friendship.

If any credit may be given to a sort of newspaper in verse entitled *La Muse Historique*, which Loret published at the time, Mademoiselle de la Vergne was not too well satisfied with her mother's second marriage. The motive to which the *Muse Historique* attributes this feeling on the young lady's part is curiously characteristic of the period, and of the

place. It is, namely, the irritation of a jealous vanity at seeing her mother's charms preferred before her own!—

> Ayant cru, pour être fort belle,
> Que la fête seroit pour elle ;
> Que l'amour ne trempe ses dards
> Que dans ses aimables regards ;

and so forth. But there was a much better reason why Mademoiselle de la Vergne should not have looked very favourably on her mother's marriage; and one which it is much safer to attribute to a lady who was famous throughout her life for sense, prudence, and—not to say it maliciously—a judicious regard for her worldly interests. And this reason may be found in the fact that in marrying the Chevalier de Sevigné, Madame de la Vergne settled upon him a life-interest in the whole of her property after her death. And only at the Chevalier's decease was it to revert to his stepdaughter. In fact, Madame de Sevigné, in a letter to her daughter announcing the death of the Chevalier de Sevigné, says: "Madame de la Fayette now begins to inherit her mother's property." This was in 1676.

Renaud de Sevigné was the relation and friend of the famous Cardinal de Retz, and one of his principal adherents and agents during the troubles of the Fronde. The Cardinal raised a regiment of cavalry (in 1649), and gave the command of it to his kinsman the Chevalier de Sevigné. The regiment went by the name of the Corinthians, for the reason that De Retz was titular archbishop of Corinth. The Chevalier being unfortunately beaten at the head of his regiment, the wits of the day, who were anything rather than reverent, called this defeat the "first to Corinthians." When De Retz was arrested after the return of the King to Paris, in October, 1652, De Sevigné retired to Anjou with his wife and stepdaughter. And two years later, when the Cardinal was removed to the castle of Nantes, the Chevalier took Mademoiselle de la Vergne to visit him there. We have De Retz's own account of the interview, narrated with the nonchalant candour of a man too thoroughly self-satisfied to be put out of countenance by the coldness of any dame or demoiselle living.

"She was," says he, "very pretty and very amiable. She pleased me greatly; and, to say truth, I did not please her at all." He then proceeds to account for this surprising fact. "Whether it were that she had no inclination for me" (No inclination for your Eminence? A pleasant absurdity!) "or whether the suspicions diligently instilled into her, even from the old Paris days, by her mother and stepfather, and the accounts they had given her of my inconstancies, and my different love-affairs, *had put her on her guard against me*" (*Much* more probable! It may well be, indeed, that the poor girl was making a violent struggle to withstand your Eminence's dangerous fascination). "Howbeit, I consoled myself for her cruelty with the facility that was natural to me." (Doubtless! Like a gallant Gallic Cardinal "all of the olden time!")

This unintentional testimony to Mademoiselle de la Vergne's taste and

modesty can only be fully appreciated by those who, from a study of the memoirs of the time, have gained some idea what manner of man Jean-François de Gondi, the clever, ambitious, unscrupulous, intriguing Cardinal de Retz, really was; not merely as he figures on the shifting scene of politics, but in his private life, beyond the threshold of which it would be impossible in these pages to conduct the reader. Nevertheless, he exercised an extraordinary influence over most of those men and women with whom he came in contact, and Bossuet has said of him that it was impossible either to esteem, to fear, or to hate him *by halves*. And whatever bad taste Mademoiselle de la Vergne may have shown in remaining insensible to the Cardinal's personal fascinations, it is certain that she was his zealous political partisan, and that she remained a *Frondeuse* at heart to the end of her days.

To an early intimacy with Mademoiselle Catherine-Henriette d'Angennes, daughter of the Baron de la Loupe, who was connected with the family of the Marquis de Rambouillet, Maria de la Vergne owed an introduction to the Hôtel Rambouillet. Despite her youth she speedily attracted the special notice and favour of the "Grande Marquise"—by that name Madame de Rambouillet was known in those, her palmy days,—and, says Segrais, "*learned a great deal from her.*"

The two chief influences in her early life were thus, politically and socially, the Fronde; intellectually, the Hôtel Rambouillet. In a short notice of Madame de la Fayette prefixed to her *Histoire de Madame Henriette*, in the excellent and valuable Collection Petitot, the writer says, "We insist on these facts" (the facts, namely, of her having been brought up in her stepfather's house amid all sorts of intrigues directed against the royal authority, and of her early introduction to the Hôtel Rambouillet), "because we shall have to examine later, how far she was able to emancipate herself from the first impressions of her youth."

To us it appears pretty evident that these "first impressions of her youth" produced lasting effects on her mind and opinions. She had individuality enough to differ greatly from her teachers; but none the less did she profit by them. And, indeed, what *can* sane originality be except a healthy mental digestion and assimilation?

Mademoiselle de la Vergne had the honour—it was an honour at that period—of having the epithet "Précieuse" applied to herself by Scarron, and doubtless by many others, in the days before Molière's play of the *Précieuses Ridicules* had brought the term into ridicule and disrepute. She was almost a marvel of learning for her times, and might well have been considered extremely "blue" even at present. Besides being well acquainted with her own language and with Italian, she was a very competent Latin scholar. The celebrated Ménage, and Rapin, undertook to teach her Latin. "After three months' lessons," says Segrais, "she knew more than her masters. In making her construe, the two *savants* had a dispute together respecting the meaning of a passage, and neither would yield to his adversary's opinion. Madame de la Fayette

said to them, '*You neither of you understand anything about the matter.*' And, in fact, she gave them the true explanation of the passage, and they at once agreed that she was right."

Think of that! Not only was she right, but she induced two savants to concur in saying so. Truly one might wish that the manner of her triumph (unless Segrais does her injustice in his account of the affair) had been more gracious. There is a little touch of hardness about it—a self-satisfied inconsiderateness which does not altogether attract our sympathy. However, her instructors were charmed with her talents, and were never weary of making much of them by word and pen. Ménage, in particular, was so proud of his brilliant pupil's rapid progress that he addressed some laudatory Latin verses to her. They are to be found in a collection called the *Poëmata*, published in Paris in 1667 :—*Ad Fontem Villæ Jancurtiacæ. Ad Mariam Magdalenam Lavernam. Amyntas anceps*, &c. Unfortunately, he was thoughtless enough to translate the young lady's name (La Vergne) into Lavernula, or Laverna. As Laverna was the Roman goddess of thieves—their patron saint as it were—this slip on the part of Ménage caused it to be said that after all there was nothing surprising in the fact that the Prince of Plagiaries should have chosen for his divinity the goddess of thieves. The following epigram—not, it must be owned, of a very dazzling brilliancy—was made on the occasion :—

Lesbia nulla tibi est, nulla est tibi dicta Corinna ;
Carmine laudatur Cynthia nulla tuo :
Sed cum doctorum compiles scrinia vatum,
Nil mirum si sit culta Laverna tibi.

In the year 1655, being then twenty-two years old, Mademoiselle de la Vergne was married to François Mottier, Comte de la Fayette, Seigneur de Nades, and lieutenant in the French Guard. He was, moreover, the brother of Louise de la Fayette, an ex-maid-of-honour to Anne of Austria, and an ex-mistress of Louis XIII. Cardinal Richelieu compelled her to retire to the convent of Sainte Marie de Chaillot, of which she became Superior, and where she died in the year 1665, just ten years after her brother's marriage with Mademoiselle de la Vergne. We shall have occasion to revert to the convent of Sainte Marie de Chaillot by-and-by.

The memoirs of the time give no details respecting the Count de la Fayette. He is known to have served in Holland ; to have been ensign in the company of the Maréchal d'Albret ; and to have subsequently become, as before mentioned, lieutenant in the French Guard. And that is nearly all that is known of him. There exists, however, in an ancient collection of songs, one made on the first interview that took place between the Count and Mademoiselle de la Vergne, who, albeit it *was* their first interview, are represented as being already betrothed. But that was no unusual circumstance. The song gives a ludicrous picture of the awkwardness and embarrassment of La Fayette, who withdraws without having uttered a syllable, and is immediately pounced on (in a figurative sense) and torn to pieces by the company—doubtless, a family-party assembled

to give judgment on the "*futur*." But they all agree in declaring that the bride elect is a singularly happy and fortunate woman in the prospect of having such an utter blockhead for a husband. The lady is a little less severe—as feeling the peculiar felicity of her position—and generously replies, when interrogated as to her opinion of her future spouse, that he seems very gentle, and has an uncommonly pleasant air, *quoique peut-être bête*, and that she considers him a most eligible match. The song concludes by declaring that the gentleman—

> Ira à sa terre
> Comme monsieur son père;

and that his wife will make

> Des romans à Paris
> Avec les beaux esprits.

As Madame de la Fayette did not publish her first novel until 1660 (five years after her marriage), these last lines betray that the song must have been written considerably later than the period it refers to, and is—so far as Madame de la Fayette is concerned—a prophecy *after the fact*. Notwithstanding these sneers at the poor Count de la Fayette's stupidity and his wife's conscious superiority to him, there is no reason to believe that they were other than an attached and contented couple. Madame de la Fayette was respected as a wife and mother. The precise date of her husband's death is not known; but the birth of her youngest son took place in 1659, and it is believed that the Count de la Fayette did not very long survive this date.

In the very year of her marriage began a friendship which has indissolubly united the names of two distinguished persons, Madame de la Fayette and the Duke de la Rochefoucauld. Their intimacy was as close and affectionate as that of brother and sister, and equally pure and innocent. To say that it was unassailed by slander would be almost to assert a miracle. Hamlet knew the world, or the court—and courtiers peopled Madame de la Fayette's world nearly all her life—when he bitterly assured Ophelia that she should not "'scape calumny;" and a life-long friendship between a man and a woman, which should be at once fond, familiar, and innocent, was almost inconceivable to many shining ornaments of that shining period, the age of Louis XIV. "Some persons affected," says Monsieur Petitot, "to raise doubts as to the nature of the sentiment which united them, although it seems to be *proved* that love really had nothing to do with it."

Monsieur de la Rochefoucauld was forty-two years old when he first knew Madame de la Fayette. He was then more renowned for his gallantries than for the exemplariness of his life. But the counsels of Madame de la Fayette worked a complete change in his manners. "He has improved my mind," she said, "but I have reformed his heart;" though, indeed, the heart had but a small share in the various intrigues of which he had been the hero. He acknowledged that he had never

found love elsewhere than in romances; and that as to himself he had never felt anything of it!

Some biographers would fain have us believe that it was only after her friendship with La Rochefoucauld that Madame de la Fayette gave herself up to study, and endeavoured to store her mind with knowledge. But this may hardly be. We have seen that long before the date of her marriage Scarron speaks of her as "*précieuse;*" and this was a term by no means applied as a matter of course to every pretty young lady. They were all, doubtless, beautiful, graceful, charming, dazzling, or whatever fashionable slang epithet was in vogue. But they were not all "*précieuses.*" The word implies culture above that which was necessary to balance oneself on high-heeled shoes, or to graduate one's curtsey through every nice shade from impertinence to servility.

It is doubtless true that the influence of La Rochefoucauld helped the intellect of Marie de la Fayette; indeed, we have her own testimony to that effect. But the influence was shown more in polishing and refining than in anything else. The diamond existed already; the lapidary's part was but to enable the world to perceive its value. Segrais, who was an intimate friend of both parties, says—*apropos* of Madame de la Fayette's remark that "La Rochefoucauld had improved her mind, but she had reformed his heart"—"He not only improved her mind, but her *manner.*" He gave her "*politesse.*" We remember the little episode of the disputed passage in Virgil, and are willing to acknowledge that a dose of suavity might be a pleasant improvement to the demeanour of the fair "Laverna."

The Countess de la Fayette was a singularly sincere woman. She loved the real and the genuine in all things; she was a sovereign enemy to "humbug." For that ancient Proteus was well known in the century of Louis le Grand, though by another—by many another—name. The Duc de la Rochefoucauld bestowed on his friend the distinguishing epithet of "*vraie.*" She was *true*, under all circumstances. "*Elle est vraie,*" said La Rochefoucauld; and the word seemed to paint her character so completely that from that time forth every one applied it to her, although it had never before been used in that acceptation. Madame de Sevigné loved and honoured her to the last. We can have no better proof of it than the terms in which Madame de la Fayette is spoken of in those confidential letters to her daughter wherein Madame de Sevigné lays bare without reserve every movement of her heart. She (De Sevigné) tells her daughter (Madame de Grignan), "Madame de la Fayette acknowledges that she must yield up the first place in my heart to you, as of right. This justice should avail to obtain for her the next place in my affections, which, in truth, she wholly merits."

In 1660, Madame de la Fayette published the *Princesse de Montpensier.* This little novel, which had a great success, appeared not very long after the first representation of Molière's *Précieuses Ridicules.* It made a revolution in one branch of French literature, that of fiction. Up to the period of its appearance, the novels in vogue had been those of La Calprenède, of

Mademoiselle de Scudéri, of Gomberville. They were read with avidity in court and city, and even—it is markedly stated by many memoir-writers of the time—at Port-Royal. These monstrous productions frequently consisted of from ten to twelve volumes, containing *more than a thousand pages each*. They were filled with the most improbable events, the most complicated intrigues, and the most prolix discussions on the tender passion, expressed in language so far-fetched and super-refined as to be occasionally unintelligible. Nevertheless, these extravagant compositions were read, and re-read, with the greatest delight by persons of intellect and education. Madame de Sevigné preserved a taste for them to the end of her days, and had the honesty to avow it. And from one of her letters we learn that Madame de la Fayette had also shared the general liking for the novels popular in her youth. Madame de Grignan belonged to a younger generation, whose day-dreams had not been fed by *Cléopâtre* or the *Carte du Tendre*. She, it seems by the context of the reply, had protested against the novels of La Calprenède, and her mother thus writes:—"There are examples both of the good and evil effects of this sort of reading. You do not like it: you have succeeded in life. I liked it, I have not run my career very badly. 'To the pure all things are pure,' as you say. As for me, who wished to justify my predilection, I found that a young man became generous and brave by studying my favourite heroes, and that a young girl grew virtuous and discreet in reading *Cléopâtre*. There may be some here and there who take things a little amiss. But they would do no better even if they did not know how to read! . . . The essential point is to have a well-constituted mind. One is not easily spoilt. Madame de la Fayette is still an example of this."

We see, therefore, that Madame de la Fayette had shared the partiality for these Brobdingnagian "fashionable novels." But, as the writer of the notice before alluded to shrewdly remarks, "when she wrote herself, she took good care not to imitate them." There was an interval of ten years between the publication of the *Princesse de Montpensier* and that of her next work, *Zaïde*, which appeared in 1670. After *Zaïde*, came the *Princesse de Clèves*. These two works, more considerable in extent than the *Princesse de Montpensier*, entirely superseded and caused to be forgotten the romances which people had so greatly admired previously. Madame de la Fayette wrote in a sober and simple style, and relied for her effects on a close and delicate observation of nature. She eschewed, say her panegyrists, all extravagant and improbable adventures, and described the conversation of persons of polished education and distinguished rank, "who express with elegance ingenious thoughts and delicate sentiments." This scarcely sounds to us like "accurate painting of nature!" And it is difficult to believe that persons of polished education and distinguished rank habitually "talked like a book" under all manner of trying circumstances, even in the age of Louis XIV.! But, doubtless, as compared with Scudéri, La Fayette was nature and simplicity itself.

Fontenelle, Voltaire, D'Alembert, La Harpe, Marmontel, and many others concur in giving her high praise. D'Alembert dwells with particular admiration on the incident in *Zaïde*, where two lovers who do not understand each other's language are forced to part for some months, and during their separation employ their time in studying, so that when they meet again each addresses the other in a tongue strange to the speaker, but which is the native language of the speaker's well-beloved. "There is not, perhaps," says M. D'Alembert, "among the ancients, who are so highly vaunted above modern writers, any trait of so delicate a sentiment and so tender a regard." La Harpe and Marmontel prefer the *Princesse de Clèves*. This latter work caused a sort of paper war in its day. Valincour criticized it in a pamphlet entitled, *Letters to Madame de ——, on the subject of the "Princess of Clèves."* These letters were at first attributed to the Père Bouhours. The partisans of the work replied in another pamphlet, which appeared under the title of *Critical Conversations on the "Princess of Clèves."* The controversy was chiefly excited by a passage in the book, where the princess avows to her husband that she loves another, but that she has earnestly invoked the aid of virtue and religion, and if she has not succeeded in stifling her reprehensible passion, she has at least had strength to triumph over it. M. Jay, who has also published a notice of Madame de la Fayette, observes that "the writers of that period did not conceive that a composition without a moral aim could be worthy of esteem;" and he adds, "That discovery was reserved for us."

Madame de Sevigné was at first completely charmed with the *Princesse de Clèves*, and wrote off, in the first heat of her enthusiasm, to her witty and worthless cousin, the Count de Bussy-Rabutin, pressing him to procure the book. But Rabutin, on whom what M. Jay calls "a moral aim" was not likely to have much effect, did not altogether share Madame de Sevigné's opinion. He criticizes the work at some length. The first part of it he finds admirable; the second pleases him less. He objects to the confession which the Princess of Clèves makes to her husband, pronouncing it to be extravagant. And he adds a few biting words after his manner, which yet, possibly, may have a spice of truth in them: "*The author has thought more of being unlike other romances than of following good sense.*"

However, the testimony of the great majority of her contemporaries, and the almost unanimous approval of modern critics, have placed Madame de la Fayette's literary reputation on an unassailably firm basis. In the romance of *Zaïde* there are distinct traces of the influence of the Hôtel Rambouillet. M. Jay finds these traces in the elaborate discussions and *recherché* theories about love, which, he says, would have delighted the circles presided over by Julie d'Angennes and the Grande Marquise. Perhaps we should do no injustice in attributing also a little of the high morality, the purity of language, and the general elevation of style in Madame de la Fayette's writings, to the early inspiration of a society which, under Madame de Rambouillet's auspices, eschewed coarseness, vulgarity, and a low tone of sentiment; albeit they laid themselves open to some

ridicule in their devotion to all that was elevated and refined. Before quitting the subject of Madame de la Fayette's novels, it may be as well to state that the well-known man of letters, Segrais, to whom she was a firm friend, and who found an asylum in her house after he had been disgraced by "Mademoiselle," whose gentleman-in-waiting he was, gave the countess some assistance in her literary work. This assistance, however, consisted merely in hints as to the construction of her books and the disposition of the incidents. The invention and language were entirely her own, as Segrais has explicitly acknowledged.

We have said that we should have occasion to revert to the convent of Sainte-Marie de Chaillot. It will be remembered that Louise de la Fayette, the countess's sister-in-law, was Superior of this religious establishment. In the course of her visits thither to see her sister-in-law, Madame de la Fayette formed a very important acquaintance. The widowed queen of our Charles I. passed a great part of the year at the convent of Sainte-Marie de Chaillot. Her youngest daughter, the Princess Henrietta of England, as she was styled, conceived a great liking for Madame de la Fayette. When the young Princess was married, in 1661, to "Monsieur" (Philip, Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIV.), she accorded to her new friend the right of private entry to her at all times. There was a great difference of age between them; Henrietta being barely seventeen, and Madame de la Fayette eight-and-twenty. There was a still greater difference of character. The Princess was kind and amiable, but giddy and impulsive; whilst Madame de la Fayette was naturally grave, and, to quote Segrais, her judgment surpassed her wit. (This dictum, by the way, was extremely well received by the subject of it, who aspired rather to solidity than brilliancy of intellect.) Notwithstanding these differences, or perhaps because of them, the Princess and the Countess de la Fayette became fast friends. "Madame," as Henrietta was always called after her marriage, delighted in holding long conversations with her friend, in the course of which she related to her some of the most private anecdotes of the Court, and even some which concerned her (the Princess) personally. In the year 1664 the Count de Guiche, whose mad passion for the Princess Henrietta made a great noise at the Court, was exiled. We will proceed in Madame de la Fayette's own words:—

"One day when Madame was giving me an account of some very extraordinary circumstances relating to his (De Guiche's) passion for her, 'Do you not think,' said she, 'that if all this that has happened to me, and the matters pertaining to it, were written, it would make a pretty history? You write well,' she added. 'Write! I will furnish you with good materials.' I entered into the idea with pleasure, and we made the plan of our history just as the readers will find it in these pages."

The memoirs exist, and extend from the year 1659 to the year 1665. When they had reached this point the Princess must have ceased to furnish the materials for them, and Madame de la Fayette passes abruptly, without any transition, from 1665 to 1670, to recount the

premature and mysterious death of Madame, by whose side she remained until she had breathed her last. Madame de la Fayette speaks of the death of this unfortunate Princess with the accents of genuine grief. "I experienced an affliction as deep as can be felt in seeing her expire. She was the most amiable Princess who ever existed, and had honoured me with her favour. This is one of those losses for which we can never be entirely consoled, and which leave behind them a trace of bitterness throughout the remainder of our lives."

Of the *Histoire de Madame Henriette d'Angleterre*, and the glimpse it affords us into the interior of a royal household of those days, we have not space to speak at length. Albeit, there are matters in it which give rise to some curious speculations, and which, did time and place "adhere," might be worth examining. It may be noticed in passing that M. Auger, in his article on Madame de la Fayette in the *Biographie Universelle*, has fallen into the singular error of styling these memoirs *un roman historique;* which is the more strange, inasmuch as M. Auger is the author of a biographical notice of Madame de la Fayette which he has prefixed to an edition of her works, and must, therefore, one would suppose, have been well acquainted with all her writings. Certain it is, however, that the *Histoire de Madame Henriette d'Angleterre* resembles nothing less than an *historical romance.*

The *Memoirs of Henriette* were first published in 1720, and have frequently been reprinted. We have, moreover, from the pen of Madame de la Fayette, *Memoirs of the Court of France during the Years* 1688 *and* 1689. These are curious and interesting, although brief. There is a great difference observable between these memoirs and the history of Madame. In the latter, Madame de la Fayette permits herself no critical reflections; in the former she loses no opportunity of aiming a shaft of satire against Louis XIV. and his Ministers. The history of Madame is a plain, and sometimes dry statement of facts. But then it was written under the eyes, and almost at the dictation of the King's sister-in-law. In the *Memoirs of the Court of France* Madame de la Fayette is more at liberty, and confirms what we have stated, namely, that she was always a *Frondeuse* at heart.

She was, however, treated with great consideration by the Grand Monarque. He granted her a pension, and received her with distinguished favour whenever she went to Versailles. Madame de Sevigné expatiates in more than one of her letters on the royal graciousness and kindness to her dear friend. Madame de la Fayette had two sons. The elder followed the career of an ecclesiastic, became an abbé, and enjoyed several benefices. The second was a brigadier of infantry, and died in 1694 at the age of thirty-five. His mother, however, did not live to mourn his loss. She died in 1693 in her sixtieth year.

The latter years of Madame de la Fayette's life were very sad. She survived her friend, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, thirteen years; but, in all that time, she never recovered from the sorrow of his loss. Madame

de Sevigné has painted her friend's grief with incomparable pathos and simplicity. "Where," she writes, "can Madame de la Fayette look for such friendship, such companionship, such sweetness, such agreeability, so much consideration and regard for her and for her son? She is infirm, she is always in her chamber, she never goes abroad. M. de la Rochefoucauld was sedentary like her. This rendered them necessary to one another. Nothing can be comparable to the confidence and the charm of their friendship. Think of it, my daughter. You will find that it is impossible to meet with a greater loss, or one for which time is less able to offer any consolation. Madame de la Fayette's weak constitution succumbs under this affliction. She has a fever, brought on by fretting." And again: "Time, which is so kind to others, augments, and will continue to augment, her sorrows."

She appears to have suffered prematurely from the bodily infirmities of old age. But her intellect remained clear; although there is a passage in one of Madame de Sevigné's letters which pierces one like a cry of despair, wherein she says that Madame de la Fayette is so overwhelmed by grief that she *tries to stupefy her mind*, and takes as much pains to banish thoughts and ideas as others take to excite them.

Madame de la Fayette sought help and consolation from religion. To us it appears that such seeking came rather late, and that there can be little merit in offering to heaven a heart weary of earth. But, on such points, our best wisdom fails us. We know, at least, that Marie de la Fayette did not lay before her God the lees of a life stained with crime and self-indulgence, as was the case with many of her compeers. She chose for her confessor the Abbé Duguet of Port-Royal, and her latter days were passed in the practise of the most austere piety.

Such knowledge of her character as can be gleaned from her contemporaries—foes as well as friends—may be thus summed up:—She was a sincere, clear-minded, judicious woman. Her few attachments appear to have been deep and lasting, as is often the case with those whose affections are not easily aroused, nor lightly given. She was accused of hardness, and perhaps the accusation was not altogether unjust; but a universal amiability, an eider-down softness of demeanour, such as distinguished Madame de Sevigné, for example, was not compatible with her reputation for truth-telling. Such a reputation may be a crown, but it can hardly fail at times to be a crown of martyrdom! She was a woman of business; managing her own affairs and those of her sons with great prudence and energy. Neither is this trait one to conciliate liking. The world likes a woman to be helpless,—unless the world happens to need her strength. One feminine trait may be recorded,—one little womanly concession to public opinion which even the sincere Madame de la Fayette thought it no harm to make. Although she was an excellent Latin scholar, she took considerable pains to conceal her learning, "*in order*," says Segrais, "*not to arouse the jealousy of the other ladies.*" Of course the gentlemen would not have thought of being jealous of her.

Prince Moleskine's Conspiracy.

A RUSSIAN SOCIALIST BUBBLE.

I.

And so it was announced in all the newspapers of Paris, that Prince Moleskine, having seen all that there was to see in the Capital of capitals, was about to return to his own country to accept a high post under Government.

The journal which first spread the tidings was the world-known and fashionable *Gazette des Boulevards*. Thence the news was copied into most of the London papers, one of which, in the letter of its Paris correspondent, added a few particulars which I may as well transcribe *verbatim*:—

Prince Moleskine, that elegant and accomplished cavalier, with whom more than one of my lady-readers has certainly danced at the Court Balls of the Tuileries, is one of the wealthiest landowners of the Muscovite Empire. We must go back in recollection to the mirificent era of the Grand Monarque to find in France anything approaching in splendour to the estate and château of Moleskine. I, who frequently dine with the Prince at his sumptuous mansion in the Avenue des Champs Elysées, can speak, from experience, of the exquisite urbanity of my noble host, of the delicate and *recherché* fare of his table, and of the never-ceasing flow of affability and wit, which makes the banquets of the Hôtel Moleskine recall the dazzling feasts of Alcibiades and Lucullus. But what pen can worthily describe the ancestral domain of the Moleskines, situated on the River Kama, in the Province of Tcheremiss, and extending so far in its fertile expanse of field and pasture, wood and hill, that it would need the swiftest horseman seven days to traverse it? Ah reader mine! let those who will rejoice over the Revolution of 1793 and gloat over the downfall of the fairest nobility in Europe, but suffer—yes, suffer—one whom party prejudice has never blinded, nor republican fallacies deceived, to give a short sigh of regret to those courtly times when chivalrous France—the France of Saint Denis, the lilies, the oriflamme, and the white banner—was not obliged to look abroad to behold baronial castles and princely manors. Up, shades of Robespierre and Marat! Up, rabble sans-culottes! and chuckle over your work! What are the riches of the wealthiest of your nobles, now—of a Montmorency, of a Luynes, of a Larochefoucauld—as compared with the wealth of Prince Moleskine? Like that scion of the House of Esterhazy, who, in reply to the British nobleman who had boasted of having three thousand sheep, answered calmly: "And I, my lord, have three thousand shepherds," so likewise could Monsieur de Moleskine say to the wealthiest of France's degenerate nobles: "For every acre of land you possess, I own a village; for every cottage, a farm; for every farm, a palace!" Ah! gentlemen of the nineteenth century! Ah! citizen-bourgeois! you have fallen upon fine times, when the state and luxury that were wont to find their homes on the banks of the Seine have taken refuge on the frozen shores of the Neva! No wonder the Boyard Moleskine should be impatient to return to his own land. No wonder he should yearn to be rid of our pinchbeck

civilization, with its cheap restaurants, cheap politicians, cheap coats, and cheap talents! He must feel himself stifling in this paltry, middling atmosphere of ours. *Bon voyage*, Prince! my respectful sympathies are with you; my best, most deferential wishes will follow you.

This effusion was much relished by the readers of the paper in question, who almost felt as if they knew the Boyard themselves upon hearing him alluded to so familiarly. It is not very certain, by-the-by, whether the versatile correspondent just quoted had really ever sat in person at Prince Moleskine's table; but, if he had not, it is of no great consequence. A writer whose occupations take him constantly into the *Grand Monde* is naturally too well bred to draw any distinction between the houses where he has actually dined and those where he would like to dine. His account of the Russian Prince was read by a countless number of good-natured folk, who imbibed it all as gospel truth, and fell to wondering naïvely whether the Prince's estate was as big as Yorkshire, or as big as Yorkshire and Lancashire both together. The women opined that it must be in size and beauty something like the Principality of Wales, and, though some of them marvelled that the high-toned journalist should call Paris a city of cheap restaurants, yet they thought it quite natural that a man who had such a prodigiously fine property as the Prince should find the French capital rather small, and should be in a hurry to get home again. Amongst those of the Paris public, however, who were not indebted for their acquaintance with Russia or with Prince Moleskine to imaginative "Own Correspondents," a quite different version prevailed as to the Prince's reasons for departing. It was pretty well known in the clubs and drawing-rooms which the Prince frequented, that he was in not the slightest haste to be off—nay, that, far from contemning our pinchbeck civilization with its cheap coats, cheap talents, &c., he had the highest opinion both of the civilization and of the coats, and would gladly have remained in Paris until the end of his days, but for the awkward fact that he had run through every rouble of his money, and could no longer afford to live in our atmosphere, paltry and middling though it might be.

As for the ancestral domain of the Moleskines situated on the River Kama, in the Province of Tcheremiss, and extending so wide that no horseman could cross it in seven days, the Prince himself was the first to laugh at it: "For," said he, ruefully, "it is true enough that it would take a horseman a week to ride through my estate, but the reason is, that there is not a road in the place, and that half the property is composed of quagmires. And as regards the farms and villages," added he more ruefully still, "I daresay something might be made of them in good hands, but up to the present I have never been able to persuade my tenants to pay their rents, so that I do not think I should be much the worse off without them."

"Then you mean to say you are entirely ruined, my poor Prince?" observed the young Count de Lamotte de Bœurre, examining his friend compassionately through his eyeglass.

"Very nearly," answered the Prince, twirling a cigarette with melancholy composure. "Six years of Paris, London, Baden, and Homburg have run through all my stock of ready money. My agent writes to say he can't raise another kopeck, so that unless I manage to get a place out of Government, I must shut myself up on my estate, and eke out an existence on our national *tstchi*, or cabbage-soup."

"That won't last long!" interposed the joyous Marquis de l'Aumelette-Soufflée: "you will point out to your tenantry the reciprocal advantages of Quarter Day, and, when you have enlightened their understanding and eased their purses, come back to us here in better spirits and stouter than ever."

"Mercury, the God of rent, hear you!" replied Prince Moleskine piously. "Though how to touch the understanding of a Russian peasant, now that our holy father the Czar has abolished the knout, I confess seems to me a mystery."

The foregoing conversation was being held in a saloon of the Café Anglais preparatory to one of the five or six farewell suppers which Prince Moleskine intended giving to different batches of his friends before bidding adieu to France. He was not in a particularly festive mood—no Russian ever is when about to return to his native land—but he did the honours of his table with a becoming show of unconcern, and towards 2 A.M., when the product of Madame Clicquot's vines had been round some ten or eleven times, rallied sufficiently to take a hopeful view of his position. He had an uncle who was Cabinet Minister at St. Petersburg, a statesman of the old Russian school, strong upon protocols, and devoted to the interests of his family. He had never kept up much intimacy with this relative, whom, to tell the truth, he had always considered a bore; but he resolved that, on the next day, he would despatch him a few Mayence hams, a Strasburg pie or two, and a case of *Château Lafite*. These delicacies would be sure to soften the Minister's heart, and might enable him to discover some snug sinecure where his nephew would be spared the humiliation of eating cabbage-soup and the painful necessity of retrenchment. Pleased enough with himself for having imagined this plan, Prince Moleskine adjourned with his friends to the club of the Rue Royale to finish the night—or, rather, to begin the morning—with a little *trente et quarante* at five napoleons the stake. When he returned home, precisely as the big bell of Notre Dame tolled six o'clock, he was still in a sanguine vein. He had lost three thousand francs, but this was a trifle. He remembered some fine sinecures under the Russian Government, which were worth ten or twelve thousand roubles a year, and he felt, no doubt, that his uncle would have the good taste to put him in possession of one of them.

A few hours later, however, when Prince Moleskine had slept, dreamed, got up, and breakfasted, he found himself out of sorts and despondent again. The morning's post had brought him a budget of letters from friends who had seen announced his departure in the papers, and wrote, some

to condole with him and others to congratulate him on that high post under Government, which he was popularly supposed to have obtained. There were a good many tradesmen's bills, too, and these were not calculated to raise his spirits; for a man never sees so clearly how foolish a thing it is to ruin himself as when he contemplates the memoranda of his purveyors, and asks himself how much real enjoyment he has had for his money. As the Prince desired that his exit from Paris should be as dignified as possible—in other words, as he had no wish to go off clandestinely with the reputation of being beggared, he had appointed a fixed date for settling his debts and leaving France; and, upon consulting his almanack, he now perceived that he had only six days left him. He took up a packet of visiting-cards and sat down to write in the corner of each of them, very moodily and reluctantly, the letters P. P. C. It is incredible how sorrowfully a Russian traces these letters when he is anywhere west of the Danube. And yet in Russia, as elsewhere, small boys are taught the virtue of patriotism; and Prince Moleskine, when at school, had been made to write from copy-book texts: "*Moscovia is the pearl of nations. Our Czar is the Father of his people.*"

Towards four o'clock, having dressed himself and filled his card-case, Prince Moleskine put a cigar into his mouth and went out on foot to take a turn down the Boulevards. The air of the Boulevards is the quintessence of that Parisian atmosphere which Russians so love, and which poor Prince Moleskine had but a week more to breathe. Besides, on this occasion he had a particular object in selecting this walk. He possessed a good many literary and artistic acquaintances whom he wished to invite to his farewell suppers; and the Boulevards are a place where every Parisian who holds a pen or a pencil may be seen on business or otherwise between four and six.

As the Prince debouched on to the Boulevard des Italiens, the pavements and cafés were teeming with bustle. It was just the hour when the evening papers come out, and when editors and journalists, delighted to have got their work over, desert the dozens of offices in the Rue du Croissant and the Rue Montmartre, and spread in thirsty hordes along the whole line of thoroughfare between the Théatre des Variétés and the Grand Hôtel. It should be mentioned, by the way, that a wonderful amount of good-fellowship exists between French journalists, notwithstanding the spirit with which they abuse each other from the columns of their respective papers. The fact that the *Feuille de Chou* is at daggers drawn with the *Feuille de Radis*, does not prevent the writers of those interesting prints from fraternizing very amicably when they have wiped their pens. They sit cheek by jowl in the same cafés; and though the *Feuille de Chou* has frequently accused the *Feuille de Radis* of being supported out of the secret-service funds, and though the *Feuille de Radis* has retorted the accusation with bitter irony, yet the combatants seem to think none the worse of one another, and will often take their absinthe peacefully and like good Christians at the same table.

Prince Moleskine had not walked far when he ran almost into the arms of a small, dapper man, who was scurrying along at a racing speed with a glass in his left eye, and a large bundle of papers under his arm.

"I beg your pardon," said the latter rather testily, in the tone of one whose meaning is "Confound you!" and he was about to start off again when, catching sight of the Prince's face, his own features cleared, and he exclaimed, holding out his hand:—"Oh, it's you, Prince. How do you do? You see before you one of the most unlucky men in Christendom."

"Unlucky, my dear Monsieur Roquet!" answered the Prince, laughing. "I can hardly believe that; I always see you so cheerful. What's the matter?"

"Ah! yes, unlucky and indignant too," continued the little man, beginning to gesticulate. "Look here!" and he drew from amidst his papers a long proof-slip covered with corrections. "I declare it's infamous," he cried, "infamous and disgusting. There's no living in such a country as this any longer. But, stay, we shall be able to talk better in a café. Come along: here are two seats vacant."

And, without further ceremony, the little M. Roquet, who appeared very friendly with Prince Moleskine, pushed him towards one of the tables outside the *Café Riche*, and shouted to a waiter to bring two glasses of absinthe.

"We can talk at our ease here," he proceeded, laying down his papers, and gabbling so fast that his words appeared to jostle and run over each other in issuing from his mouth. "I've told you already it's infamous and disgusting, and I repeat it. This is not a civilized country; we're worse off than you, Prince; Siberia's nothing to it. Ah! the brigands, with their press laws, and fines and imprisonments, and judges sold by the pack! Thought is fettered, sir, our tongues are padlocked, our pens loaded with chain-shot! You don't believe it? You smile! Look at this, then, and see. I've never written a better article than this in my whole life. It's brilliant, caustic, witty. Oh, yes, witty: for I know my merits, and I'm not ashamed to own them. It's the wittiest thing that's been printed for this many a day; for, betwixt you and me, there's not a man in France that can hold a candle to me in irony; and yet you perceive how the simpletons have hacked it about! And who do you imagine it is who has done this? Who, should you think, has been Vandal enough to run his pen through such passages as this, and this one again, and that one there? The Censorship? Not a bit of it; there is no censorship for papers. The editor? No, for I am the editor. Who then? Why, the proprietor, Prince, my own partner, my friend—hang him! Yes, you stare! No wonder, so did I. Isn't it enough to make one go mad and tear one's hair, and howl and emigrate to the end of the earth, and found a newspaper amongst the crabs and tadpoles?"

The little man stopped to take breath; gulped down a large draught

of absinthe; and then started off again like an express train; his two eyes gleaming with the brightness of a couple of lanterns, and his voice growing shrill and sharp as an engine-whistle.

"But all this is just my luck, Prince. Fortune has played tricks with me ever since I was fool enough to buy an ink-pot, a pen, and a ream of paper. Never yet have I met with an editor whom I could convert to my views. Every one of them, without exception, has grown scared, shied, and finally thrown me over. The first I wrote under was poor Griffon—he's dead now, and I'm sorry for it, for I bear no malice. Before I had been a fortnight on his paper, I got him six months' imprisonment, and the printer two. They ought both to have been uncommonly grateful, for it established the success of their business, and made the paper sell like bread in famine time. But they weren't. When Griffon was sentenced, he said: 'If it was you who had the imprisonment, Roquet, I should see no objection; but you've got off with six days; and what with fine expenses, and fees for defence, this affair has cost the paper 20,000 francs. Try and see if you can't tone down a little.' Of course I made an effort to do what he called 'tone down,' but I couldn't manage it. He used to shred my articles into ribbons. 'That'll never do,' said I. 'I'm a Republican, and must speak plain.' 'So am I a Republican,' answered Griffon; 'but that's no reason why I should ram my head against a stone wall. Our press laws are too hard for us, man; you must keep clear of them. It's a suicidal plan to tilt headlong against them as you're doing.' Well, the upshot of it was, that Griffon and I parted, and I went over to a new paper that had just been founded. I remained there exactly six weeks, and then an article of mine got the paper suppressed. The proprietor and editor cursed as I've never heard men curse before or since; so that I got disgusted and sent them both a challenge. We fought with pistols. I winged the proprietor, but got winged by the editor, and we had a month's imprisonment all round for fighting. I don't believe they were true Republicans, though; I suspect they were subsidized by the police. The editor used to cut the most telling hits out of my papers, and the article that sent us into court would never have crept in at all, had he not been absent the day it appeared. After this, I went about from paper to paper, but it was everywhere the same. My style was too sharp for them. Egad! I was not the man to mince matters. If Government had a sore place anywhere, I laid my finger on it at once, and made them shriek. The Ministers hated me like pitch. They tried to buy me. They had a special and particular spy to dog me about. Ah! you don't know what are the persecutions that a man of genius has to suffer in spreading the holy light of truth! But dear Republic!" (here the little M. Roquet uncovered himself.) "I bore it all for thy sake. Yes; one of these days when thou hast broken the sceptre of the usurper in thy strong fair hands; when thou hast shattered the throne into faggots to make fire for the poor; when the palace of the tyrant has become an asylum for the homeless

sick, and the drum of the prætorian no longer beats in our streets to remind us of our slavery; then—yes, then, thou wilt remember how thy devoted child endured affliction for thee, how he loved thee, how he proclaimed thee, even in the face of the myrmidons of oppression, to be ever sacred, beautiful, and peerless!"

M. Roquet delivered this apostrophe with the same volubility as if he had learned it all out of a book. A stranger hearing him for the first time might have fancied the honest little man's absinthe was too strong for him; but the Prince, who appeared to know him well, listened with quiet attention, and made no effort to interrupt him.

"And now," went on M. Roquet, taking a new gulp out of his glass, and catching up his mangled proof again—"And now you want to know what this is. Look at these erasures, Prince; look here, and look there, and tell me whether you don't think, upon your honour and conscience, that a man who could have marked out such passages must be sold to the police. The man who did it is Potiron, my partner; for I scorn now to call him my friend. Six months ago, seeing that the Government and all the editors together were in league against me, I went to Potiron, who was once a grocer, and has money, and proposed that we should found a paper together. He was to find the funds and I the talent. Said I, 'You'll be aiding in a glorious work, and you'll have tickets for all the theatres gratis; my name will soon raise the circulation to fifty thousand, and we'll share the profits.' Nothing could be fairer, and Potiron accepted. *La Carmagnole* came out, price three sous, and with me as editor. The first week we sold ten thousand, the next week twenty, the third week Potiron and I were in prison; but I edited the paper all the same at Sainte Pélagie, and the circulation went on rising and rising until we had reached fifty thousand, and the Government was half crazy. Well, would you believe it, Potiron was no sooner out of prison than he declared he had had enough of it? It is true we had had forty thousand francs' worth of fines laid upon us in instalments; but what of that? weren't we suffering for the good cause? I put it in this light to Potiron, and appealed to his manliness. But he said, 'Damn the good cause! if it goes on in this way I shall be ruined.' And this morning, when I came down to the office, what should I see but a barrister, whom the poltroon had hired to revise my writings and see that there was nothing actionable in them? You observe what a fine hash the two between them have made of my article; there's not a sentence they've left untouched. By heaven! they've pared down my ideas until there's not so much as the rind remaining of them. But this was too much. I lost patience. I told Potiron to his face that I had found him out; that he was in the pay of the Rue de Jérusalem; and that he was playing into the hands of despotism. I threw down my keys—for I can no longer associate with venal individuals whom I despise—and here I am."

"And what are you going to do now?" asked the Prince.

"To-morrow morning, at six o'clock, I am going to fight Potiron in

the Bois de Vincennes, with foils," answered M. Roquet, simply. "After that I think I shall go abroad for a year or two, and travel. France is not a country where a man of large views, like me, can live. The eternal truths of liberalism are trampled down on our shores. Genius writes its leading articles with a sergent-de-ville on its right hand and a gendarme on its left. I am sick of it; I must have change of scene. I must try and forget that my country has given birth to such men as Potiron."

"What do you say to coming with me to Russia?" asked Prince Moleskine, smiling.

"Ah!" exclaimed the little journalist, looking up enthusiastically, "that's an idea! Russia is a virgin soil—at least, virgin for such a purpose as mine. The seeds of liberty have never been scattered there; the whole intellect of the nation lies fallow. I might found a paper, title, *The Harbinger*—harbinger of truth, you know; price ten kopecks, published weekly in French, with cheap edition in Russian for the native workmen. You provide the funds and I furnish the talent."

"But," expostulated the Prince, who had not expected to be taken at his word, and was as much astonished as amused at the small man's earnestness—"But, my dear Monsieur Roquet, you will find gendarmes and police spies as plentiful in my country as here, and even more so: our press laws, too, are much less pleasant than yours."

"Ah, yes, but there will be the glory of apostleship. Do you count for nothing the triumphs of John Huss, of Savonarola, of Luther? the pride of being the first to spread light among a benighted people! I shall send my name down to posterity in the annals of your national history, Prince; and I shall write a book in three volumes on the social condition of Russia, octavo size, bound in red, price five francs, six editions in the first month."

He had already drawn a pencil from his pocket and was rapidly making an inventory of the things he was likely to want for his journey. M. Roquet was one of those men whose brains appear to be perpetually simmering like the kettles of Cornish housewives. He bounced about with the restless activity of a fly in a drum. As soon as he had a scheme in his mind—and he had about twenty a day—he was for putting it into execution at once, and it cost him no more hesitation to set off for Russia at a week's notice than it would have done to go on a pleasure-trip to St. Cloud or Asnières. There was no question about his being a man of talent; but his talent was of that peculiar sort which is always getting its possessor into trouble. All government would be impossible if there were many such good-natured, wayward, feather-brained subjects as he. Opposition to constituted authority was with him a creed, as well as an instinct. Had France been governed by a Royalty he would have been an Imperialist; as it happened to be ruled by an Emperor, he was a Republican. Very conscientious withal, he had fought half-a-dozen duels with brother journalists who had taunted him with having no settled convictions, and he would have fought half-a-dozen more had anybody

ventured to insinuate that he was bigotedly devoted to any particular party. Everybody in Paris knew him, and most people liked him, for he was generous with his money, wrote very drolly, and praised himself with so much naïveness that it was impossible to suspect his good faith. In his private conviction he esteemed himself not only the first journalist in France but the first in Europe; and the Government had done not a little to foster this opinion in his mind by the foolish way in which they had persecuted him. It was, perhaps, a failing in M. Roquet that he looked upon all who were not of his way of thinking as police spies; but we are none of us perfect. Taken all in all, he was a pleasant-tempered, obstinate, kind-hearted fellow, and the fact that he always took the part of oppressed factions was proof enough that, whatever may have been his other defects, truckling to people in power was not one of them.

The Prince had frequently met him out, and thought him amusing and quaint; but the idea of taking a journey across Europe in the company of such a man was not one he seriously entertained, and he began to grow somewhat alarmed on observing how firmly the notion had seized hold of his excited friend's imagination. He tried to throw out a few hints as to the uncivilized character of the Russian police and the utter want of ceremony displayed by the Czar's Government in its relations with subversive prints; but this in nowise damped the little man's ardour. "Oh," said he, with a wave of the hand, "forewarned is forearmed. I know I shall be persecuted: so was Alexander Herzen, who founded the *Kolokol*, but after all what do I care? They won't suppress me at once; and before I am compelled to hold my tongue I shall have made my name as famous among your poor *moujiks* as it is among our own unfortunate, down-trodden proletaries."

(Proletary, by the way, was the word M. Roquet invariably employed in alluding to the working-classes. His readers of the Faubourg St. Antoine and the Quartier Mouffetard felt rather flattered by it. They fancied it was a synonym for "injured innocents," and it is not very certain M. Roquet did not think so too; he found little time to consult dictionaries.)

"But I have an uncle who is a Minister," ejaculated the Prince, looking rather blank, "and I am afraid he would not thank me, Monsieur Roquet, if he knew I was connected with an opposition paper."

"I am glad you've an uncle who is a Minister," rejoined the journalist, complacently; "for that will save us from fleabite vexations. Open persecution I don't mind, but petty annoyances, such as the police heap upon one here, always puts me out of temper. It's well to have a friend in a high place; he acts as lightning conductor. As to your uncle not liking the opposition, that, of course, is prejudice; we'll write him out of it, we'll convert him to our side. By the way, where do you live?"

"In the most desolate spot of all Russia," groaned Prince Moleskine, hoping to disenchant his tenacious friend. "I am two hundred and fifty leagues from a railway-station. The postman only comes near us once

every ten days. There's not a man who can speak French within a week's journey of me."

"That's capital," exclaimed little M. Roquet, rubbing his hands. "To be sure, I should have been glad to publish *The Harbinger* at St. Petersburg, but I shall learn more of Russian life by being right in the centre of a peasant district. Besides, if we are so far away from a railway station, I shall be able to bring out a dozen numbers or so of the paper before the Government hears anything about it. I suppose there's a printing-press in one or other of the country towns near you? I'll write the paper and you shall translate it into Russian. A dozen numbers will be enough to revolutionize the whole district. Egad! we'll have a rising like those of Stenko-Razin and Pougatcheff. The other provinces will take fire. There will be some fighting, castle-burning, a general insurrection of the peasantry; the Government will be frightened into giving reform, and perhaps a constitution, and you and I shall both have a statue. Waiter! two more glasses of absinthe."

"You go and be hanged," Prince Moleskine felt tempted to say, but he refrained himself, and remarked grimly, "I see you are bent on it, my dear Monsieur Roquet; but I warn you it's a dreary hole, and the cookery is detestable; we shall have nothing to eat but cabbage-soup."

"Prince," rejoined the small journalist, drawing himself up to his full height and laying his hand on his heart, "I am the son of my own works. My father sold shoestrings at a street-corner, and many's the time when I've gone to bed without so much as a crust of bread under my waistcoat. Do you think the fact of being obliged to eat cabbage-soup would deter me from undertaking the regeneration of a country? The Spartans lived on rancid broth and black bread, and yet Sparta begat Lycurgus and Leonidas."

"But I'm not of your opinion in politics," protested Prince Moleskine, getting desperate; "I'm not a republican."

"No, I don't suppose you are," rejoined M. Roquet, indulgently, "for I don't suspect you've any political opinions at all as yet. You're a Prince, you're not thirty years old, and you've been amusing yourself all your life; what can you possibly know of politics? But I'll instruct you. I'll prove you that my doctrines are the only ones compatible with common sense, and you'll soon fall in with my views, for I observe you've a fair amount of intelligence."

After this flattering prediction there was nothing for it but to give in. Prince Moleskine shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

"Well, I start on Thursday next," he said.

"I shall be ready," answered the journalist. "Here's the list of things I shall want; I am going to order them to-night."

"You seem to make very light of your duel with M. Potiron," observed the Prince, good-humouredly, as he rose to go. "Mind he doesn't run his foil through your plans!"

"No danger," answered M. Roquet. "He can't fence: we shan't

hurt each other. By the way, I've not sent him my seconds yet: will you be one? And yet no," he added, quickly: "you're a nobleman—it wouldn't do. If my poor proletaries were to hear that I asked a Prince to second me, they'd fancy I had turned my coat."

"But what will they say, then, when they learn that you have gone to Russia with me?"

"Oh, in your country it doesn't matter. East of the Vistula every gentleman is a prince. Besides, who knows? we may convert Russia into a republic. Masaniello turned Naples upside down, and he was less of a man than I am."

Upon this the small journalist shook hands confidentially with the Boyard, and hurried away in the direction of the Rue Montmartre to hunt up two seconds, whilst Prince Moleskine, considerably astonished at the results of his afternoon's walk, strolled off to Chevet's to order some Mayence hams and some Strasburg pies for his uncle the Minister.

II.

A fortnight later the two fellow-travellers were at St. Petersburg. We have not wasted time by describing the farewell entertainments which the Prince gave his friends, nor the exemplary manner in which he paid all his bills, nor the regrets with which his tradesmen saw him depart, nor the graphic style in which the fashionable reporters descanted on his splendid estate in the province of Tcheremiss, and the yet more splendid post which the Government of his country had begged him to accept. We have not dwelt, either, on the duel, in which M. Jean-Jacques Roquet wounded M. Théophile Potiron in the fleshy part of the leg, and was himself transfixed by that gentleman through the fleshy part of the right arm. All these events were duly chronicled by the Gazettes, most of which furthermore stated that M. Jean-Jacques Roquet had accompanied Prince Moleskine to Russia to enjoy the pastime of bear-hunting, a sport in which he was known to be proficient. Our friend, the Paris correspondent, wrote to his paper as follows:—

I see that some of your contemporaries edit an absurd rumour that the Russian Boyard Moleskine has been ruined, and is leaving Paris for economical reasons. You may deny this on my authority; there is not a word of truth in it. I was dining with the Prince last night, and he assured me that his crops had been excellent and that sales of his short-horns (the Prince is a great cattle-breeder) were better this year than they had ever been before. He also gave me some valuable information as to the policy of Russia in the Himalaya question, which I reserve for another letter. The Prince was very pressing in his invitation to me to come and take a month's bear-shooting with him, but, of course, I was obliged to decline this. I am expected at the palace of Compiègne next week, and could not for the world disappoint my august Host and Hostess. You may insert confidently that the post to which Prince Moleskine has been appointed is that of High Archi-Chamberlain to H.I.H. the Grand Duchess Basilika-Petrowna; I have it from the Prince's own lips. Prince Moleskine is accompanied to Russia by a brilliant and distinguished circle of friends who are going to enjoy his hospitality. Amongst them, I quote from memory, the Duke de G——, the Duke de H——, the witty Count de X——, and my friend the celebrated journalist Jean-Jacques Roquet, who has promised me a bear-skin.

Whilst these veracious particulars were being set up in print, Prince Moleskine and his companion were being whirled across the Continent, dreaming very little of bear-shooting. The enterprising M. Roquet had set out on his journey with his arm in a sling, and with an imposing quantity of luggage. When once the train had started, he informed his friend that one of his boxes was full of works on political economy, and that another contained a small portable printing-machine, bought in case there should be any difficulty in finding a printer for *The Harbinger*. This said, he lost no time in beginning the political education of the Prince, and treated him to vivid running commentaries on the manners, customs, institutions, and future prospects of the different peoples through whose countries they were passing. He was not effectually silenced until the Polish frontier, where the custom-house officers, notwithstanding his indignant protests, confiscated his printing-machine, his box of works on political economy, a number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which he carried in his hand for desultory reading, the manuscript of a novel of his three parts finished, and a copy of the *Journal des Débats*, discovered by one of the officials in the tail-pocket of his coat. As he made a good deal of noise at first, and talked of liberty, the rights of man, and other odd things, a functionary took down his name in a note-book, and telegraphed it to St. Petersburg; so that poor M. Roquet, who had been exceedingly glum during the last four-and-twenty hours of his journey, found a gentleman in a braided cap on the look-out for him when he reached the capital, and was followed to his hotel by this attentive person, who was good enough to dog him wherever he went for the first few days after his arrival. As ill-luck would have it, the two travellers alighted in St. Petersburg on a day when there was a grand review of troops. The hotel where they put up was the best in the Newski Prospect; and M. Jean-Jacques Roquet, as he looked out of his window, beheld the entire length of that enormous thoroughfare, as well as the whole of the immense square of St. Isaac, filled with compact masses of soldiery marching in full uniform, and with a stiffness which only Russian warriors have, to the Imperial Park, where the reviews take place. There might have been fifty thousand soldiers or more, and very tough they looked. "Dear me!" muttered M. Roquet, "that's an amazing number of men, isn't it?" "Oh, that's nothing," answered Prince Moleskine, significantly. "It's not half the garrison of St. Petersburg." And upon this M. Roquet could not help thinking that he had perhaps made an unfortunate choice in selecting Russia as the birthplace of his *Harbinger*.

By way of acquainting himself with the periodical literature of the country he asked for a native paper, and a waiter in red plush breeches and a laced coat brought him up on a silver tray the *St. Petersburg Gazette*, in the chief column of which he read this:—

The day before yesterday His Imperial Majesty the Czar deigned to go out shooting in the woods of Czarskoe-Selo, and met with an accident, the branch of a

tree falling on his august head and prostrating him to the earth. Dr. Oiloff, the court physician, was at once on the spot, and his Majesty was graciously pleased to allow his head to be rubbed with an embrocation, after which he deigned to feel better, and by the end of the day was graciously pleased to feel no more pain at all.

Whilst the French journalist was occupied, very much to his stupefaction, in conning over this and other like paragraphs, Prince Moleskine was getting ready for a visit to his uncle. Out of courtesy he had sent to the Minister's mansion immediately on his arrival to beg the favour of an audience, and had received the verbal reply, that he might come when he pleased. This seemed to him kind, for it does not take much to set a man hoping: and he started out rather cheerfully, attired in a dress-coat, white gloves, and a white cravat, as if he were going to the opera. The broad, empty wind-swept streets of St. Petersburg had, however, an unconscionably bleak look to him as he rolled through them in the rumbling landau of his hotel. He mentally compared the shabby crazy *droshkis* plying for hire down the roadway, the dirty, howling, bearded *isvostshicks*, the small greasy tea-shops, and the dumpy, hard-featured Russian tradeswomen, with the smart cabs, coachmen, cafés, and shopkeepers of the pleasant city he had just left, and he prayed from the depths of his heart that his powerful relative might have some lucrative post to dispose of which would enable him—Prince Moleskine—to live six or seven months a year out of his native land—pearl of nations though it was. At his uncle's mansion, in front of which were two mounted sentries armed to the teeth, Prince Moleskine was kept an hour and a half in an anteroom: after that twenty minutes in a corridor; and it was not until he had seen some two score petitioners of various degree defile before him that his own turn came. An usher with a gold chain round his neck led him silently down a long succession of passages, and showed him into a large, warmly carpeted room, where a thin man with gold spectacles and a face wrinkled like a baked apple, was writing letters at a table, and looking uncommonly sour and sulky.

Prince Moleskine had not seen his uncle, Prince Shepskine, for seven or eight years, and was a few seconds recognizing the unaffectionate individual who did not so much as hold out a hand to him, but addressed him abruptly in a snappish tone without even looking up from his papers.

"So you've come back to Russia, have you, Paul-Petrowich,* and you've run through your last rouble of course, else I shouldn't see you here? I bet a thousand ounces of gold to a brass kopeck that you've called to ask me for a place!"

This was as unsatisfactory a commencement as could have been imagined. Prince Moleskine had expected something quite different. He stammered, blushed red, and looked foolish.

---

* Paul Petrowich means "Paul, son of Peter." Russians always address each other in this way, that is, by adding the name of a person's father to his, or her, own Christian name. In speaking to a woman, one would say, "Paulina-Petrowna," *i.e.* "Pauline, daughter of Peter."

"Don't try and tell a lie," pursued the statesman, taking a pinch of snuff. "Lies are in excessively bad taste, especially when they are useless. When I saw your Strasburg pies last week, I said Paul Petrowich will follow soon after, and sure enough here you are. Now, what is it you want me to do?"

Paul Petrowich, who had not been prepared for such a summary method of conducting the conversation, found nothing to answer, and gazed fixedly at his own hat.

The Minister eyed him with apparent curiosity for a moment or two, then took out a roll of parchment from a drawer in his table, and pushed it towards his nephew:

"There," said he: "I knew you'd be here soon, so I made out your appointment on the day the pies came. You will be good enough to start to-morrow, and alone, please, for you've brought a jackanapes of a Frenchman with you, who had better go back to his country without loss of time. Your place is a very good one: Deputy-governor of Leghis, in the Caucasus. The salary is not large, but the emoluments are worth five or six times the actual pay; and if you're clever,—which I don't believe you are, by the way, else you'd have married a girl with money, and not come back begging places of Government;—if you're clever, I say, you ought to build up your fortune again in a few years' time, and then we'll make a Governor of you."

"The Caucasus!" exclaimed Prince Moleskine, who had turned pale at the dreaded name and was staring blankly at the parchment. "But you really can't be in earnest, sir; it's as bad as sending me to Siberia!"

"Do you mean to say you refuse?" asked the Minister, in a tone of anger and surprise.

"I can never go to the Caucasus," said the young man doggedly; "your excellency knows you would never have gone there yourself, had you been in my place, and I in yours. What is the use of being born in the nineteenth century if one is to eke out one's days amongst a herd of cut-throat barbarians? Frankly, sir, I should not have troubled you if I had foreseen such an offer as this."

"Confound you, you forget to whom you're speaking!" shouted the little apple-faced statesman with indignation.

"No, I know I am speaking to my uncle," answered Prince Moleskine naïvely, "though I confess you have shown little feeling of kinship for me in this circumstance. All our other relatives have been enriched by you. It would have cost you nothing to give me a good place. It isn't out of your purse that the salaries are paid." The poor fellow's disappointment was so keen that he was uttering his thoughts with a frankness upon which he would never have ventured had he taken time to reflect what a very sorry helpmate is plain speaking.

"Hark you, my nephew," said the Minister, throwing a furious glance at the young man, "I advise you to keep a look-out over that tongue of yours, otherwise will be getting you into trouble. What have

you ever done for me, I should like to know, that I should take you in hand, and enrich you? I am not speaking here of affection, for affection is a commodity which we Ministers learn to dispense with. But you might have been of use to me. A man with the fortune and position which you had, can always make himself serviceable, even when he throws his money out of the window. You have been six years in Paris and have been spending at the rate of a million francs a year. What have you to show for your money? Have you a single friendship that can help either of us, have you acquired a grain of influence in diplomatic circles, have you taken a lead in French society and made yourself a name, have you secured any allies for me in the Paris press? God knows you could have coaxed half the journalists of the capital over to our side had you chosen to try! But no, you have made a fool of yourself, and that is all. I have watched you narrowly; you have never laid out a sou that can bring you in any interest. You have stupidly frittered away every kopeck of a fortune that could have made you one of the most popular gentlemen of Europe had you invested it adroitly. Your habitual associates have been simpletons; you have never courted the society of respectable women, so that there is not a drawing-room in Paris where you can be said to have any footing. If I send you back to France as secretary of legation, or to one of the small courts of Germany as envoy, we should both of us be laughed at, for you enjoy the reputation of being a noodle. Here is this Himalaya question in which we are involved. Is there a single newspaper in Paris that would publish a leading article for you, taking our view of the case? No, the whole Paris press is dead against us; the only intimate acquaintance you seem to have amongst journalists is this crack-brained M. Roquet, who has so high an opinion of your intelligence that he hopes to make a red republican of you after a few weeks' intercourse."

"And what if he does? I don't think I have much inducement to be an Imperialist," muttered Prince Moleskine, bitterly, though he marvelled that his uncle should be so well informed as to the designs of the Frenchman. "Before this Emperor of ours emancipated the serfs, my estate was one of the most flourishing in the country. Now half my fields lie fallow; my tenants are emigrating to the south. The agent writes to say that he can get nobody to work, and not a kopeck of rent. I ought to be in the receipt of half a million roubles a year, and I am a beggar."

"Do you think any of us liked the emancipation of the serfs?" hissed the Minister, rising and speaking close to his nephew's ear. "I, too, should have been beggared if I had not been where I am. But the thing is done now, and neither you nor I can undo it. Don't be a fool, Paul Petrowich; take this place I offer you. There's many a man better off than you are would go down on both knees to have it. In a few years, I tell you, it will make you rich, and then we can see and give you something better."

"I won't go to the Caucasus," replied Prince Moleskine, out of temper and unreasonable from his disappointment. "I'd rather go and live on my estate, hole as that is."

"Then go to your estate," said the Minister, in a rage. "Only, I will tell you what, my nephew. So long as you were cutting your capers in Paris you didn't hurt me. Here it is different. I've as many enemies as white hairs on my head; and if you were to play any tricks in this country, or talk liberal trash within earshot of anybody, some of the responsibility would be sure to fall upon your relatives, myself amongst the number. Now you've ruined yourself, but I'm determined you shan't ruin me. You can go back to your estate; but I shall have a sharp watch kept over your actions and speeches; and as for that M. Roquet, he shall be conducted back to the frontier this very day. He can mean no good by coming here, and we've enough Radicals of our own without being in need of foreign importations. That's all I've got to say. Good-morning."

"You can do your worst," said the Prince, defiantly. "I will do what I please, and say what I please, and have what friends I please."

The Minister shrugged his shoulders and rang the bell; and with this exchange of amenities the interview terminated.

III.

The Minister did his best to have M. Jean-Jacques Roquet conveyed under escort to the frontier, but it was much less easy than he had thought. M. Roquet screamed and barricaded himself in his room, and harangued the hotel waiters. Prince Shepskine was not so firmly rooted in the favour of the Court as to risk doing an arbitrary act without a shadow of pretext. His main objection to the Frenchman was, that, being a notorious republican, his intimacy with the nephew of a Minister might give rise to unpleasant gossip amongst the crowd of envious folk who lie in ambush round men in high places to traduce and supplant them. But when he saw what a noise the man of letters was disposed to make, he thought it prudent to let him alone, or, rather, to reserve the persecution of him for some more convenient opportunity. Prince Moleskine stuck valiantly by his friend, though, in his heart of hearts,—having nothing but trouble to expect in his company,—he wished him at Kamtschatka. The police were instructed to offer an apology, and to declare that they had mistaken M. Roquet for somebody else—which they did with extraordinary good grace and civility. M. Roquet seized upon the occasion to ask for his printing-press, his works on political economy, his manuscript and his *Revue des Deux Mondes*. The police gave him a blank form of petition to fill up, and after driving to seven different Government offices and conversing with twenty-three clerks, the journalist was assured that inquiries would certainly be made, and that he might call for an answer in six or seven weeks' time.

Prince Moleskine, however, was in a hurry to be off, and hastened his preparations for that purpose. St. Petersburg is only supportable to those who have money. The Prince's ruin was better known among his own countrymen than it was in Paris, and it is never particularly agreeable to be stared at and pointed at, and even tittered at, as poor Prince Moleskine apprehended he would be, if he ventured to go into society. As for M. Roquet, the sedulous attentions of the man in the braided cap, who followed him closely wherever he went, had ended by giving him the nightmare. He, too, was anxious to be gone, and he heaved a sigh of relief when he found himself in the heavy landau that was to bear him away to the province of Tcheremiss. In addition to the Prince's valet, groom, and cook, who journeyed everywhere with their master, the travellers were this time accompanied by a house-steward, who had been engaged at St. Petersburg. He was recommended by the landlord of the hotel, and was a Pole, with a shock of red hair, and a surprising talent for murdering every language in Europe. He talked to the Prince's valet in German; to his cook in Italian; to his groom in English, and completely ingratiated himself with M. Jean-Jacques Roquet, by declaring that though his—M. Stanislas Milkiewickz's—body was in Russia, yet his heart was in France, in the land of Danton and Roquet! The journey was as painful a pilgrimage as any man could wish to his bitterest foe, as an expiation for a life of sin. Save in winter, when the roads are frozen, and one can ride in sledges, heaven help the bones of the Russian traveller! Ruts two feet deep; branches of trees lying across the roadway; huge flints as big as cannon-balls; and every couple of hours a break-down, with no houses or light, no wheelwrights within twenty miles to set matters straight, and a fierce howling savage wind sweeping up clouds of dust to blind the horses, and choke the passengers. Here, the landau comes to a dead standstill, imbedded up to the axletrees in slush, and the travellers have to get out and push and tug, and perspire until they are wet through, and covered from top to toe with mud. Further on, the harness breaks in two or three places at once, and has to be mended with bits of string, pocket-handkerchiefs, braces, or with one's necktie. One of the horses then lies down in the dirt, and refuses to move on. The Russian driver takes to coaxing: "My little father, my pigeon, my pretty cousin, don't lie down so and break the heart of your poor *isrostshick*." This occupies about half-an-hour, during which the travellers blow on their finger-tips, and flatten their noses against the window-panes, to see if there is a village within view. The roadside inns have nothing to offer one but a brick floor to sleep on. People take their own provisions with them; if not, they must put up with bread, a few shades darker than the *schwarz-brod* of Germany, and infinitely more sour. Perhaps also they may get a piece of raw ham, derived from a gaunt, thin pig, tough and stringy; but this is problematical. To crown the pleasures of the voyage, one must exhibit one's passport and road-bill five or six times a day at the posting-houses; and if one has let either of them drop

in one of the numerous breakdowns, there is nothing for it but to go back all the way and get another. A Russian postmaster would allow himself to be hashed into mincemeat sooner than allow you to pass without the written official order.

It was exactly five weeks after setting out from St. Petersburg, that the Prince, his friend, and suite, drove up the moss-grown avenue, which led to Moleskine Hall, or Moleskine Castle, eighty-three versts from the town of Oufa, and twenty from the River Kama. The house had an imposing appearance, and gave the beholder an idea of regal pomp, until he got inside and saw the faded furniture, damp walls, cracked ceilings, and general look of desertion and squalor that hung about the old place, which had not been inhabited by a Moleskine since the time of the Emperor Paul. It took the two friends a week to organize themselves comfortable quarters, by selecting the best of the chairs and tables, the carpets and curtains with fewest holes in them, and the rooms which had least suffered from decay. Prince Moleskine was evidently humiliated at showing himself so considerably reduced from his Parisian splendour; but he was no longer sorry that M. Jean-Jacques Roquet had accompanied him, for life would have been simply unbearable in such a place without a companion. The journalist on his side bore everything remarkably well. Before leaving Paris, he had obtained a commission as travelling correspondent to a daily paper, and he was no sooner settled in his new abode, than he fell to work writing astonishing letters upon the things he had seen and passed through. Editors were only afraid of M. Roquet when he took to handling French affairs. There was no objection to his abusing Russia, and the Russian Government, so that M. Roquet gave his pen and imagination full play. Unfortunately, as we shall see by-and-by, all his letters were stopped by the police; whence posterity has been deprived of the pleasure of reading many pleasant chapters, and doubtless of acquiring much novel information.

Three months passed in an uneventful manner, the days succeeding each other monotonously. Up to mid-day the Prince was generally busy with his agent, either riding about the estate, or going over accounts with him to see what could be made of his dilapidated budgets. M. Roquet during the same time wrote, with admirable care and zeal, the letters which were never to reach their destination, or busied himself about the first chapters of his work in three volumes on the *Social Regeneration of Russia*. In the afternoons the friends used often to go out shooting, the game on the estate being as abundant as if a gun had never been fired in the district. However, there is the stuff of a conspirator in every radical Frenchman, and M. Roquet was not the man to confine himself to exploits entirely harmless and peaceful. He had not come to Russia to enjoy himself, he was bent on dabbling in political achievements of some sort, and he had by no means abandoned his idea of preaching what he called his doctrines of truth among the *moujiks*. Unfortunately, there was no possibility of starting the light-disseminating *Harbinger* in the district. In

the first place there was no printer within four-and-twenty hours' journey, and in the next, none of the peasants, with the exception of the priest, the postmaster, and the tax-gatherer, could read.

M. Jean-Jacques Roquet was rather of the opinion of Cæsar, that it is better to be first at Moleskine than second at Rome. The little man could not do without his incense, and the homage of a posse of worshippers. He longed to see the honest, squab faces of the peasants gathered round him admiringly, and he cursed the difficulties of the Russian language which stood in the way of his addressing them on topics political and social, and awakening them to a sense of their degradation. He did not confide any of his sentiments on this point to his host, for he had noticed with chagrin that the Prince was less amenable than he had hoped to the language of truth and liberty; but he took into his confidence the excellent Pole, Milkiewickz, who appeared filially devoted to him and expressed his readiness to abet him in any schemes he might form for overturning anything or overthrowing anybody.

It was a great comfort to the zealous Frenchman to have this faithful Pole with him. M. Stanislas Milkiewickz agreed with everything he said, and was the person who always rode with his letters to the post, so that they might be in safe hands. When pressed to it by the journalist, M. Milkiewickz would tell a heart-rending tale of the afflictions which his family had endured at the hands of the Russians. At certain passages he used to tear his red hair out in large bunches, and run his head against the wall with avowed intention of putting an end to his miserable life. It took M. Roquet an immense deal of bodily strength and oral persuasion to reconcile him with existence: on a certain occasion the two fell into one another's arms and wept. How not feel confidence in such a man? One day M. Roquet revealed to him a scheme for holding secret socialist meetings among the peasantry of a neighbouring landholder, with an ulterior view to provoking an agrarian revolution.

The landholder upon whose tenants M. Roquet proposed to begin his work of enlightenment was a wealthy prince, who lived in St. Petersburg in winter, at Baden or Gastein in summer, and like most Russian noblemen of fortune, never came near his estate save once in the course of every five years, to levy extra supplies of money. Of course M. Jean-Jacques Roquet could not do his friend Prince Moleskine the ill-service of exciting his peasantry to sedition, but he had no terms to keep with Prince Moleskine's neighbour, and it pleased him to think he might organize a rising by means of occult meetings held after nightfall in caverns or out-of-the-way barns, like the early Christians of yore, and the Albigenses. It was arranged that the Reformer should write his *Harbinger* in manuscript, and that Stanislas Milkiewickz should translate it into Russian, read it aloud to the peasants, and give copies of it to the two or three cultivated *moujiks* who could read.

It should be mentioned that the peasants were in as hopelessly miserable a condition as it is possible for human beings to be. The

emancipation had not done them much good,—rather the contrary; for whilst they had been serfs they had always had food enough and clothes enough, whereas ever since they had been set free they had thought it better to remain idle than to work, and had borne the inevitable consequences. As far as it was possible to understand their ideal of a perfect social system, they expected their landlord to feed and clothe them for nothing, that is, without exacting labour or rent. They were very drunken, and, of course, servile beyond conception. On first arriving at Moleskine, M. Roquet had turned red with indignation on seeing that a peasant who brought him a letter knelt down in the mud on both knees to deliver it. He had gesticulated to the peasant to rise, but the man, thinking he was going to be beaten, had crouched down and whined. "Just heaven!" exclaimed the apostle of liberty, "is this possible?" And his devoted friend, the Pole, answered, "Alas! it is. But we will enlighten them, Monsieur, and then they shall walk proudly like you and I——"

It was a grand day, therefore, for M. Jean-Jacques Roquet when, after six weeks of secret meetings in caverns and barns, he was set upon one afternoon by twenty *moujiks*, who carried him in triumph round a field, pawed him all over, kissed him, and then forced a pint of the national *vodki* (whisky) down his throat, as a token of their esteem. The cavern meetings had been a success. M. Roquet stood on a stool and preached in French, whilst M. Stanislas Milkiewickz translated his utterances into Russian. When any sentiment unusually fine left the lips of M. Milkiewickz, the peasants pounded their boots on the floor and threw up their hats. The passages best appreciated were those in which the iniquity of levying rent was exposed and reviled with bitter invective. "No landlords!" thundered M. Roquet. "No landlords!" echoed M. Milkiewickz, in a shrill falsetto. "No landlords!" roared the *moujiks*. "Every man earn his own bread by the sweat of his brow!" continued M. Roquet. "Yes, by the sweat of his brow!" clamoured the overjoyed peasants; "and when the crops fail, then the landlords must nourish us!"

After every one of the meetings, and every week when the *Harbinger* appeared, M. Milkiewickz used to write a long letter to "a cousin" of his who lived at St. Petersburg. M. Roquet often wondered at the epistolary fervour of his confidant; but the Pole had such a good heart! He and his cousin had been brought up together, and the latter would be sure to fall ill, he said, if he did not receive four pages of close writing two or three times a week.

Things were at this juncture when throughout all the district it was rumoured that Prince Moleskine's neighbour, the Prince Roubcloff, was going to pay a flying visit to his estate, to raise money as usual. On like occasions it had been the antique usage of the peasants to groan, weep, and bury their earnings in the ground, whence they were only dragged out eventually by dint of menaces from the Prince's agent. On this occasion it struck M. Roquet that it would be a noble sight and a startling if the peasants,

instead of groaning and hiding their money, were to gather boldly together in front of Prince Roubeloff's castle, to groan at that nobleman as he drove up to his door, to pelt him with a few stones, and obstinately to refuse paying rents. He consulted with M. Stanislas Milkiewickz, who waxed enthusiastic at the idea, and withdrew soon after to write a longer letter than ever to his cousin at St. Petersburg. The peasants were all sounded, and not a dastard heart found among them. The preaching of M. Roquet had given them courage. If he would only consent to head them, they, their wives, and their children would follow him wheresoever he chose to lead them, and break all the windows of Prince Roubeloff's castle if he liked. M. Roquet was transported. He began to feel like Tiberius Gracchus and Masaniello.

Meanwhile Prince Moleskine had been growing a little astonished at the numerous goings to and fro of his friend. M. Roquet would disappear at unaccountable times and return home excited and muddy at strange hours in the night. He never said anything to the Prince as to where he went nor how he busied himself, and when pressed very hard with questions would only answer mystically that he had the regeneration of a great people at heart. This alarmed Prince Moleskine, who had no great passion for regenerating, and one afternoon (it was on the eve of the day when Prince Roubeloff was expected) he asked his friend point-blank where on earth he spent his time when he went out of nights?

"Prince," answered the small man, who was flushed and looked unusually joyous—"Prince, there's no reason why I should conceal it from you any longer. If you come with me by-and-by you shall see."

This was all the Prince could extract until nightfall, but when dusk had set in M. Roquet took his host to a barn, at the door of which, to his considerable surprise, he made him swear eternal secrecy. This done, he pushed open the door, and the mystified Prince found himself in a large place, lighted by two flickering rushlights, but with not a human being visible. "There are three hundred regenerated peasants there," exclaimed M. Roquet triumphantly, but saying this he stopped short and looked blankly round the deserted room.

"Hullo!" he shouted, "what's this? Hi! Milkiewickz, why are they not here?"

The faithful Milkiewickz had followed the two gentlemen to the door; but he had disappeared of a sudden and was not to be seen. The Frenchman went out to look into the dark, but as he set his foot on the threshold six men surrounded him with lanterns. "In the Czar's name I arrest you," cried one, stepping forward. And another walking up to the Prince said: "Prince Moleskine, you must come with us to St. Petersburg."

"To St. Petersburg!" exclaimed the Prince astonished. "What for?"

"To answer the charge of having organized a Socialist conspiracy with the aid of your accomplice, this Frenchman."

IV.

A few days later all the papers of Europe printed this telegram :—

A formidable Socialist conspiracy has just been discovered near Oufa, in the Province of Tcheremiss. Some thousands of peasants are said to be implicated in the affair, one of the objects of which was to assassinate the Senator Prince Roubeloff, to burn his castle, and then to provoke a general agrarian rising. The ringleader is Prince Moleskine, nephew of the Minister Shepskine ; and it is supposed that several leading members of the aristocracy are amongst his accomplices.

Soon after there was a trial, and the principal witness was the honest Milkiewickz, who turned out to be a police spy. His testimony was conclusive. M. Jean-Jacques Roquet and Prince Moleskine were, along with some two score of regenerate peasants, found guilty of conspiring to undermine society, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Prince Moleskine, however, as being a Minister's nephew, was secretly pardoned and ordered out of the country. On the "letters of mercy" which were delivered him in prison he found written, in his uncle's hand : "Paul-Petrowich, this is in acknowledgment of the Strasburg pies. I think you will agree with me, that you would have done as well to go to the Caucasus."

As for M. Roquet, on hearing that the Prince had been amnestied, he exclaimed at once : "Ah ! I knew it. He was sold to the police, he and Milkiewickz together. When I get out of prison I shall send a challenge to them both. They have betrayed me ; but, what is worse, they have betrayed their country." And with grave indignation he added : "And to think that if it had not been for them Russia might now have been a Republic !" Needless to say that amongst the general public Prince Moleskine was credited with having contrived and organized the whole affair, and that amongst journalists, historians, and all who plume themselves upon a knowledge of politics, the plot will be known to the end of time as "Prince Moleskine's Conspiracy,"

Social Slavery.

We are all slaves, it is said. We are in abject bondage to an absolute power, whose laws are enforced by sanctions not less binding than those which are due to the will of the supreme legislature. Our taskmaster is known as the World, or Society, or Respectability, or Mrs. Grundy, or some other name at which the boldest cheek turns pale, and against which the loftiest courage fails to rouse an effectual revolt. Poets and novelists and satirists try in vain to stimulate us to break our bonds. We retire into our accustomed humility and submission so soon as our masters come against us, armed not with swords but with scourges. We dread sneers and ridicule and even the commonplace gossip which we affect to despise, and are only too glad to fall back into the ranks and escape censure by doing as nearly as may be precisely what everybody else is doing.

> The world is too much with us ; late or soon,
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers ;

and though we may escape from its presence for brief intervals, we can no more do without it than without the atmosphere which we breathe, or than a drunkard can do without his habitual dram. Women, we are told, are the greatest sufferers from this miserable code. They suffer, not merely from the positive laws which the advocates of feminine rights are endeavouring to repeal, but from a subtler and more penetrating influence. They are slaves in soul as well as under forcible constraint. Submission has become part of their very nature, and is inculcated upon them as a virtue. The few who rise superior to the prejudices of the time suffer cruelly from the hostility which they excite, and suffer even more because nobody can break loose at once from an established code of morality without suffering some moral deterioration. The bitterest part of their martyrdom to the cause of their sex is that they are not only ridiculed, but do, in fact, more or less deserve to be ridiculed. The slave who is just freed from his bonds is not yet acclimatized to the new atmosphere which he breathes, and he brings some discredit upon liberty because he has hardly learnt how to use it. Educate a woman to the full extent of her powers ; let her be, as these advocates assert that she will be, as capable by her intrinsic abilities of taking part in the battle of life as any of the male sex ; and yet the main result to her may be the awakening of cravings which can never be satisfied under existing conditions ; for even if new careers be opened to her, she will hardly be able to tread them firmly without awkwardness and self-consciousness. She will deserve to be looked upon, as Johnson expressed it, as a dancing dog, whom we admire, not because he dances well, but because he dances at all ; only we must

suppose, to complete the parallel, that we regard dancing as something highly unbecoming to the canine nature and to be discouraged as an improper exhibition. The dog which danced under such circumstances would probably be a rather disagreeable dog.

That word "improper" is supposed by French novelists to have a mysterious force in England; and to indicate the extent of our subservience to this degrading bondage. It is the badge of our slavery. Let anything, however natural in itself, be tabooed by fastening upon it this sacred label, and an Englishman will shrink from it as from an object tainted by the plague. Everywhere in France we see official notices importing a *défense* to do this or that or the other. In England the word improper is written in invisible, but to the insular mind not imperceptible characters, across a number of paths, and we obey the warning as implicitly as our neighbours obey official authority. The English Sunday, for example, is a trifling but conspicuous example of the truth. It is improper to take a walk on that day; it is improper to stay away from church; and highly improper to join in any kind of public amusement. Hence that inexpressible dreariness and coldness of the English Sabbath which produces so unpleasant a sensation in foreigners, and their profound belief that Englishmen habitually commit suicide sooner or later to save themselves from its recurrent horrors. The opinion that this strictness is due to any religious convictions is repelled on the simple ground that extreme dulness is not a natural part of the religious theory of a Christian Sunday; and therefore it is supposed that, somehow or other, the intense gloom which shrouds an English town on the first day of the week is part of the homage which we pay to some unknown divinity whose function it is to decide without appeal what is and what is not improper. This subservience, however, is not confined, like many other parts of our religion, to one day exclusively; but, in addition to condemning the seventh of our lives to unqualified gloom, converts the whole of English society into a machinery for enforcing a superficial decorum, whilst at bottom we are, though I should perhaps shrink from saying it, no better than our neighbours. Hence that inconceivable awkwardness which is always characteristic of the true Briton. He lives in fear of offending against some undefined rule, and incurring the most terrible consequences, if he ever ventures for a moment to be natural and unconstrained. It is impossible that a man should be graceful whilst hampered by this mysterious fear: he wraps himself, as far as may be, in a stoical calm, and sternly represses every spontaneous impulse which might lead him to forget for a moment the strict observance of propriety.

I will not inquire how far this unpleasant feature of English life is a true portrait, and whether other nations may not suffer from allied forms of the same disease. But undoubtedly, whether we are or are not victims in a greater degree than our neighbours, there are many moments at which the iron enters into our souls. Our grandfathers used to lament over the progress of luxury, and picture to themselves an imaginary

state of nature in which everybody should be perfectly simple and truthful and despise the conventional regulations of an effete society. Their language seems strange in days when we are more inclined to indulge in cant about progress and demonstrate by statistical facts our enormous superiority to our ancestors. But at intervals we talk a language which is identical in substance if not in form. There are times when we wish to burst all chains of habit and to wander far away, if we do not feel quite ready to take a savage woman who may rear our dusky race. The proper cynical mood is apt to overtake us at some of the dreary ceremonies which ape the natural forms of social enjoyment. We stand at an evening-party like skeletons in patent-leather boots, and moralize upon the humbug and hollowness of the festivity that is going on around us. If all the crowd who are treading upon each other's toes could for one moment be induced to speak the truth what strange revelations would be made in a few minutes! What a quantity of petty jealousies and of mean ambitions would come to light! How small would be the results in real happiness to anybody concerned! How frankly we should confess that we were all boring each other to the very verge of despair, and that we would infinitely rather be at home, if it were not for some vague and unaccountable impression that it is the proper thing to bore and to be bored! Add all the toad-eating and the match-making and the place-hunting which, as novelists inform us, is taking place in every direction, and we shall be half inclined to believe that society is nothing but an organized system of hypocrisy, whose rules are made by clever rogues in order to provide a decent veil for their own trickery and selfishness. If people avowed their real motives the world would be too ugly a place to inhabit, and therefore an external decency is strictly enforced to cover its real deformity.

The English novel is frequently quoted by foreign critics as illustrating the freezing influences of insular respectability. We dare not speak of things which everybody knows to exist, because they are under this sacred ban; and thus all novels are emasculated and insipid. A certain school of recent writers has tried to break the charm. It is perhaps absurd to attribute to them any aim beyond that of producing a little immediate amusement; but if they seriously intended what their language seems to imply, we must suppose that they were plotting a general revolt against the laws by which society is at present tied and bound. They preach the doctrine that all is vanity with a new application. Society, according to them, is ruled by very stupid and highly respectable old fogies, who enforce their leaden rule with imperturbable stolidity. Every noble outburst of passion that scorns the old conventions is pitilessly crushed; and society, which is unmerciful to the slightest breach of propriety, is lenient to the most grovelling selfishness or the meanest avarice. There are, fortunately, a few brilliant exceptions to this dreary monotony; and, in most cases, the male exceptions are, singularly enough, young guardsmen of effeminate exterior, who conceal tremendous muscles under their gorgeous attire, and wills of iron

under their apparent apathy. When they find that the petty restraints of modern society are too cramping for their energies they are in the habit of plunging into wild excesses in foreign capitals—enlisting in the Zouaves or lion-hunting in Central Africa—hereby proving that England is not good enough to hold them. When they meet an unfortunate clergyman or barrister of the ordinary type they wither him by a bitter sarcasm, even if they may not feel it due to themselves to sling out their fists with fearful power from their hips and level the wretched being to the ground. Perhaps I have been unlucky, but I confess that my small experience of the fast young guardsman has been rather different. I have found him to be generally what is called a thoroughly good fellow, that is to say, an utterly brainless but rather affable biped, who, if he gets into mischief, does it in the most commonplace, not to say the most stupid, fashion. It is quite as easy to be a slave to conventionality in vice as in respectable life; and utter stupidity is by no means confined to the classes who go to church on Sunday and sit behind a counter on week-days. It might be a matter of dispute whether these Byronic or Satanic persons do not lead existences quite as humdrum, though not quite as useful, as those of their neighbours, who are content to plod along the ordinary high-road of decent humanity. To say the truth, I have a rooted disbelief in the scathing-satire line of business. It is so very easy and, as a rule, so remarkably pointless. Genuine satire, indeed—the fierce indignation of a lofty nature cast upon evil times, and witnessing, without power to oppose effectually, the triumph of baser men—is impressive, if not exactly agreeable. But our modern satirists seem generally to have inherited the affectation which almost neutralized Byron's passionate power, and to have lost the power which enables us to put up with the affectation. Their denunciations of the luxury and selfishness of society seem to be for the most part a transparent device under cover of which they may gloat over the external splendour of the vice which they affect to denounce. Their revolt is not that of a powerful intellect against shams and hypocrisies, but that of the valet who has a grudge against the sumptuous millinery and upholstery which he yet admires at the very bottom of his soul. It is pleasant to see how ostentatiously these virtuous modern Jeremiahs exhibit their intimacy with the wines which the aristocracy drinks and the cigars which it smokes, and even the addresses of the tailors which clothe it; how they seem to roll round their tongues the delicious morsels of sporting slang from which, as it appears, the conversation of the upper classes receives its exquisite flavour; and how they peep, as it were, through the key-holes of the smoking-rooms, whither the darlings of our drawing-rooms retire to indulge in charmingly naughty scandal. The clubs in particular are supposed, by some freak of the imagination, to be little oases in our dreary social wilderness, where the most sparkling wit, clothed in a tongue scarcely understood by the vulgar, is always playing with relentless vigour against all that the stupid humdrum world outside is

accustomed to hold most sacred. I would not affect any great intimacy with these charming retreats of our Byronic youth; but I have a certain suspicion that the intrinsic merits of the conversation would prove to be about equal to that which may be heard in an average omnibus, or in a second-class railway-carriage. Colonel Crawley was the real human being of which Guy Livingstone is the modern travesty, and half-a-dozen Crawleys form about as dull a combination as ever refused to give out a spark of wit under most energetic impulses. Our English satirists of this class do, in some degree, justify the foreign criticism. If they were permitted to be unreservedly wicked they might possibly be amusing; but our sense of decorum forces them generally to confine themselves to hinting at wickedness under a disguise of virtuous indignation; and I cannot say that, on the whole, their talents are so great as to make one regret the limitation. We had better stick to the good old domestic decencies without grumbling.

The Englishman, it may be said, is in bondage to propriety, even when he is trying to give himself the airs of emancipation. He can no more forget his respectability than he can get off his own shadow; and is awkward and stiff in his motives when he fancies that he has cast off his bonds; he is like that German baron who was found jumping over chairs and tables, and explained his eccentric manœuvres by the declaration, "*Sh'abbreus être vif*;" the national clumsiness sticks to him still, and his freest attitudes are nothing but spasmodic contortions. This objection, pure and simple, to decency and propriety, is not very likely to be successful, because, after all, though our views of what constitutes propriety may be narrow, it is highly desirable to have some regulations of the kind. However much we may dislike hats and chignons, we cannot return to the neat coats of blue paint supposed to have been fashionable amongst the early Britons. It is, however, a fair proposition that we might dress in a much more reasonable style than that we actually adopt. Modern costumes may be shown to be prejudicial to the constitution; and the conventional manners, which are to society what dress is to the body, may cruelly cramp our souls and intellects as tight boots cramp our feet. Herr Teufelsdroeck might expound his clothes' philosophy to some purpose in this respect, and has, indeed, said much that goes very straight to the point. "Is not the fair fabric of society itself," he asks, "with all its royal mantles and pontifical stoles, whereby, from nakedness and dismemberment, we are organized into polities, into nations, and a whole co-operating mankind, the creation, as has here been often irrefragably evinced, of the tailor alone?" And if so, is not the fashion in which our clothes are cut of most vital importance? The denunciation of feminine extravagance in millinery is, indeed, one of the satirist's most favourite topics, as it has been any time these two thousand years and more. But, not to follow the analogy too far, it may be fairly argued that our present arrangements are increasingly dangerous to the best part of our natures. Society, it is said, is becoming so artificial that our best emotions are

summarily crushed. It encourages an ignoble struggle for wealth and celebrity, and fails to recognize merit of the loftier kinds. A poor man, though he were a Shakspeare or a Newton, would be neglected, and the stupidest lout who ever inherited a princely fortune would receive incense enough to turn the strongest head. If, by some freak of fancy, we make a social pet of a really noble character, we do our best to spoil him with flattery more poisonous than neglect; and with transparent hypocrisy we apply a different code of laws to men and women, to the rich and poor, to those who have and to those who have not a certain superficial polish. We are pompous and elaborate and formal, and our amusements—according to the one good saying of a rather ponderous thinker—go near to make our lives unbearable. It is not to be expected that we shall enter the millennium as soon as Dr. Cumming promises; but may we not hope for a clearer atmosphere, less stifling to all honourable aspirations, and favourable to the growth of deformed specimens of humanity?

The question is somewhat of the largest, and I will only try to suggest one or two of the more obvious reflections bearing upon it. And, in the first place, it may be well to start from the palpable but generally forgotten truth that civilized society is of necessity conventional and artificial. Those adjectives, on which so much stress is sometimes laid, simply express the necessary condition of our living together at all. Certain arbitrary arrangements are just as necessary, and, for much the same reasons, as a currency. It is only a savage who has no established standard of value, and who, with amiable frankness, hits every man over the head as soon as he takes a dislike to him. The petty ceremonies of life are the small change which enables business to be carried on without striking a new bargain at every step; though it is not to be denied that many of them become exceedingly vexatious and eminently absurd. Nobody ever attended a funeral without inwardly reviling the hideous apparatus of undertakers, with all their preposterous mummery, which grates so harshly upon our feelings during the most solemn events of our lives. Why can't we be natural and simple even when we are taking our last leave of our dearest friends, and why must we be worried with all the buffoonery of mutes and plumes and hearses? The performance might be infinitely improved—as in most countries it is, in fact, less revolting than here, where the undertakers have somehow placed their feet upon our necks. But that some conventional arrangement is essential, is obvious from the fact that the very danger which we most reasonably desire to avoid is precisely that of being natural and simple. We wish to have some mode of testifying respect without explaining to the world at large whether the deceased was as the apple of our eye, or was an old ruffian who has at last taken the step which public opinion had unanimously demanded for years. There is a decency in such matters which it is needless to defend. The public is only too anxious as it is to pry into feelings with which they have no concern; and it is as well to have a uniform in which the true mourner and the indifferent observer

may equally pass muster. We must submit to do many things not very excellent in themselves simply because our neighbours do them, on penalty of advertising our private fancies and crotchets to mankind at large. People who talk about the decline of individuality are fond of declaring that eccentricity should be encouraged, because it implies indifference to the tyranny of the majority. It may be so; but I confess that eccentric people often seem to me to be only slaves to public opinion who have hit upon a more cunning way of flattering their master and appealing to the world at large for wonder if not for praise. The value of doing as the world does is that it enables you to think as pleases yourself. You are like a person who wears a domino at a masquerade instead of appearing in a fancy costume, and practically you have most liberty when you do not dash your peculiarities in people's faces.

To this must be added the equally obvious remark that the rules of society have, and ought to have, only an indirect relation to the rules of morality. That Utopia in which the virtuous man would always be rewarded and the vicious man always punished would be, like other Utopias, simply a most intolerable form of tyranny. It is sometimes complained that we are civil to a sordid and ungrateful scoundrel, with just soul enough to save the expense of salt, whilst we are pitiless to a person who has committed a petty breach of social decorum. That we are often too harsh is undeniable; but such contrasts are just as necessary as it is that the law should punish a man for hitting a cab-horse too hard, whilst it cannot touch him for gross ingratitude to his mother. If social conventions and legislation tried to cover the whole field of morality, we should have an inquisition which would be not only intolerably vexatious, but in the highest degree immoral. I may forbid a man to come to dinner in his shirt-sleeves, because it is a breach of the rules which are only to be maintained by common consent; I can't punish him for being penurious or even vicious in private, because I have no right to constitute myself his censor. If I endeavoured to do so, I should be bound also to make allowance for vicious conduct which did not, in my opinion, imply a corrupt nature; and if that were the rule, society would begin by attempting a puritanical rigidity, and would end by ceasing to be even decent. In short, men have to live together, good, bad, and indifferent; saints who would once have been canonized, and sinners who would be well qualified for the hulks; and we arrange terms to enable us to meet without flying at each other's throats, or even treading unnecessarily on each other's toes. If the rules are not absurd in themselves, and are favourable, on the whole, to our moral health, we must be tolerably satisfied, without complaining that they leave the most important offences to be dealt with in courts of a very different nature. We can no more complain that society is hypocritical for dealing only with questions of property, than that a board of health is hypocritical because it only looks after nuisances, and does not attempt to improve the minds of those who cause them.

A good deal of popular indignation is often generated by a false conception of these simple principles. If our censors are not altogether wrong in their wrath, they are apt to lay the blame on the wrong shoulders. Society, it is said, sets an undue value upon rank and wealth, and sets up very inferior idols for our adoration. And yet, to do them justice, there are some great conveniences about rank and wealth, which we cannot quite overlook. A man of rank is a man who lives in a society which has been studying for many generations how to make itself thoroughly comfortable, and which has naturally succeeded to a very great extent; he has probably acquired a sort of polish which is not altogether equal to Christian charity, but which, in its way, has very great charms for people of cultivated taste. When a man is accused of being a snob, I sometimes fancy that it is only that he has a higher appreciation of certain kinds of refinement than his neighbours, and a skin more sensitive to delicate titillation. A wealthy man, again, can offer some very tangible advantages. He can give good dinners, to which no person whose physical and spiritual natures are in a proper state of equilibrium should ever affect to be indifferent; he lives in a comfortable house; and, in short, has everything round him that the wit of man has hitherto contrived to ward off the inconveniences of dwelling upon this ridiculous little planet. It sounds very base to say that one has rather a liking for rich as compared with poor friends; and of course it is base, if it includes any degrading compliances. But if we prefer the plain truth to fine varnish, why should we deny that there is something gratifying about contact with wealth? The rich man is simply one who has an unusual share of all the physical objects of human desire and can impart them freely to his friends. Nobody who is not ready to be a fakir, or to take up his abode in the *Chartreuse*, can deny that he is more or less accessible to such pleasures. Therefore if two men are equally agreeable for their intrinsic merits, and one can season his society with irreproachable wine, whilst the other can only wash down his conversation with small beer, why should we not draw a little closer to the man from whom we can derive the higher gratification? I abandon this problem to the reflections of casuists; but I will at once add that undoubtedly these lower pleasures attract a much larger share than they ought of our desires. I am afraid that, if people ever said what they thought, most men would prefer the stalled ox with an average stockbroker to a dinner of herbs with Shakspeare. The popularity of dinner-givers depends, as has been fully explained, much more upon certain little attentions to the weaknesses which beset the human being at feeding-time than upon the brilliant qualities of the assembled guests. I fear that the same principle runs through society, and it perhaps proves, what I shall certainly not deny, that the great majority of mankind is extremely stupid. There are, in fact, few more important truths to be kept in mind, though writers in general think it desirable to sink it in compliment to their readers. One consequence is that a good deal of what is denounced as snobbery, flunkeyism, and other names (which, I may remark, will never become

obsolete for want of proper objects,) is simply a natural result of the predominance of our sensual over our intellectual natures. We like to be warm and well-fed, to be clothed in purple and fine linen, and I don't see why we should be ashamed to confess it; though the further truth, that we don't care as much as we should for pleasures of a loftier kind, is a very excellent ground for humiliation. I only regret that we should try to conceal this disagreeable fact from ourselves by talking about our bondage to social prejudices, when the real cause of our misfortune is that people have so little genuine pleasure in things which wealth cannot buy. The disease is rather more deeply seated than we admit, and will not be removed by any change in our social regulations.

Hence we find that people who attempt a summary revolt against these artificial arrangements are apt to find that they have carried their complaint with them. The enthusiasts who tried to carry out the socialist schemes were frankly astonished to discover that, when they had gathered two or three hundred people into a big house and abolished all private rights of property, they had not succeeded in eradicating selfishness. On the same principle, some of the noblest specimens of the full-blown snob, with all his normal peculiarities in a state of unusual development, may be discovered amongst the most unequivocally democratic nations. The object of their worship is perhaps a trifle more material and less picturesque than ours: but what are they to do? If a man has the soul of a snob, he must fall down before such idols as are nearest at hand; and the negative advantage of having no home-grown aristocracy does not make them any more delicate in their tastes or give them more discriminating intellects. Even so I fancy that our most determined Radicals are sometimes as humdrum as the most prejudiced of old-fashioned Tories. They propose, it is true, to turn everything upside down—to abolish the establishment, to do away with hereditary peerages, to introduce female suffrage and secular education, and the liberty of divorce, and a universal division of landed property—all of which plans, for anything I have to say to the contrary, may be highly desirable. I only remark that they would not of necessity make life more interesting or more exalted. When one talks to these ardent persons, one is generally pleased because an innocent enthusiasm is always more or less gratifying to the spectator; the fact that he does not share it gives him a pleasant sense of superiority; but I think that we are also struck by the fact that they are a trifle dull, and that human ingenuity would probably devise means of introducing narrow-mindedness and stupidity even under the most novel patent arrangements. When society was all rolled out into a dead level, it might appear that twenty million free and equal citizens had as many petty prejudices and mean ambitions as we contrive to accommodate at present. Indeed the gentlemen who revolt with the greatest energy against private decorum, as well as against political regulations, do not appear to be specially successful. A poet or a novelist makes a sensation for a short time by being extremely immoral and dealing plainly with scenes which most people prefer to pass without

notice. It is an obvious trick, and it has its merits in a purely artistic point of view. And yet after a time, when one has waded through the improper pages in search of a new sensation, it generally turns out to be a delusion. We feel like the epicure who had exhausted every resource known to the culinary art, and declared on the whole that nothing was equal to a plain dish of tripe. The good old stupid domestic novel, where nothing is allowed more improper than a marriage without the leave of the bride's grandmother, and where everybody has a fortune of five thousand a year at the last page, has its charms after a steady course of the latest French fiction. One comes to the conclusion that the ordinary rules of propriety are not the causes, though they may be amongst the results of our general dulness. We have done our best to kick over the traces, and find that the real harness is that which we carry about with us from our birth.

I say this merely by way of justifying the pleasant opinion that the defective arrangements of which we are apt to complain arise from deeper causes, and are therefore more difficult of cure, than very sanguine people sometimes appear to anticipate. I wish I could expect to see a much purer and simpler state of society, or one in which ambition was generally directed to worthier objects, and praise distributed in accordance with a higher standard of merit, for then I should hope to rival Methuselah. I fully believe, however, that our slavery, such as it is, might be rendered far less oppressive by moderate changes. It is perhaps impossible to give an accurate diagnosis of that disease of vulgarity and snobbishness which makes us fit subjects for this bondage. It is no doubt owing in part to a cause which Tocqueville would have revelled in explaining. We are more or less in a chronic state of revolution and suffer hence unpleasant consequences. In old days each man was born in his own class, he was brought up from early youth with the appropriate set of ideas, and was therefore prepared to discharge his duties with ease and dignity. He was like a mechanic who has been apprenticed from boyhood to a particular trade, and knows exactly what he is to do and when he is to refrain from doing anything. There were deep lines of demarcation which nobody thought of overstepping, any more than a lap-dog would think of drawing a carriage or the horses propose to come into the drawing-room. Grievous wrongs might be inflicted, but each class might have a dignity as it had a costume of its own. Now we are shifted hither and thither, and mixed up in such strange confusion that nobody is quite certain of his place, and every one feels that he may be unduly presumptuous or more humble than becomes him. We find old customs surviving, which we are half disposed to repudiate and half to accept as part of the necessary order of nature. Of course we are clumsy and diffident and obtrusive by turns, and feel that there is something humiliating even about the loyalty which was once a purely elevating passion. We all feel the awkwardness which would be inflicted upon the imaginary footman, whom democrats are sometimes challenged to invite to table by way of testifying to their principles, and not less upon his unfortunate master. The pushing and scrambling

of modern society produces vulgarity as certainly as shaking up a fluid that has had time to settle makes it turbid instead of clear. It is often melancholy to watch this process taking place at a visible rate of progress in remote districts. We may see in one year a picturesque peasantry with a characteristic costume, and with manners and amusements of their own. The sluices are opened which let in the great flood of tourists, and in a year or two more the whole charm is gone, and our picturesque peasant adopts a hideous imitation of the cockney dress, and becomes no better in appearance than our cabmen or costermongers. He sings the melodies from music-halls instead of his natural airs, and loses his old traditions for the dregs of popular fiction. Is he on the whole the better for the process? That I cannot answer; there is much to be put on both sides of the account; but undoubtedly he is vulgarized, and the essence of the change is that he has become subject to a set of rules which he imperfectly understands, instead of preserving the old notions which were the natural outgrowth of his position. The same process has taken place, and is still proceeding on an enormous scale throughout Europe, from the highest to the lowest classes; and it is no cause for astonishment if it has destroyed much of the old grace, whatever better things it may bring in its place. One of the consequences is, that nobody dares to trust his own taste. Put a thoroughly uneducated man in a picture-gallery, and he will, perhaps, admire some rude drawing, which he fancies he can understand more than the master-pieces of the greatest artists. He is not vulgar, but simply uncultivated. But when he feebly tries to have a taste, to admire not what he likes, but what he guesses that he ought to like, he is probably imposed upon by the first flashy and pretentious imitation of good art which has been produced by some one with as little distinct intelligence as himself. The rough old peasant of former days liked some coarse homespun vernacular, which he really appreciated; the more polished artisan admires, or tries to admire, some wretched piece of high-flown fustian, which appears to him to be the real thing. That detestable product known as buncombe, or tall talk, is an appeal to the minds of people who are too ambitious to venture to confess their ignorance. The main faults of modern society seem to arise from the same origin. We are cumbrous and affected in our manners because we want something better than we used to have, and yet cannot trust our own judgment. The luxury and tasteless ostentation of society is the counterpart of the gaudy colouring which seems to attract the uneducated peasant who has been dazzled out of his old natural customs by sudden revelations from the external world. We have lost the old sense of propriety, and try to dazzle each other by brute force of wasteful expenditure. The fragments of ancient rules which remain have lost their significance, and become dreary bits of hypocrisy. The feudal system was, I imagine, brutal and oppressive; but there was at least something natural in the mutual regard of people who were bound by ties of real service to each other. But, when the

feudal nobleman only preserves a shadow of his dignity without his power, and the emancipated serf does not know whether to insult him in assertion of the new liberty, or to grovel before him in memory of the old servitude, the manners of both become offensive. No human being in this world is so disagreeable as the raw emigrant to a new country, who understands by democracy merely the right of being insolent to well-dressed people and contemptuous of the claims of intellect and refinement. Or, if there is a more disagreeable person, it is the democrat, who is at heart ashamed of his independence, and grovels before the claims which he affects to repudiate.

I will not follow out these reflections further, though I think that they explain much of the ugliness and awkwardness of modern life. The old order changeth, yielding place to new, and we need not repine at the general result; but there are times when the order changes more quickly than the men, and we find ourselves standing amongst a heap of bare ruin, mixed with the raw foundations of new building. Time may harmonize everything, though the transitional state is highly unpleasant. Whenever that desirable change comes, we shall not perhaps find that we are very much freer than at present; only the laws will be more adapted to intelligent and civilized beings, and those who are subject to them will understand their places better.

The impulse towards simple destruction is merely a phase of sentiment in this as in other cases, through which we must hope to pass to something better. Art is not satisfactory when there is no recognized school and no established rules, and we are all vaguely fumbling about, each man after his own devices, with mediæval revivals, and classical revivals, and unadulterated modern ugliness. To make beautiful objects, we must work these conflicting elements into some sort of harmonious unity, in which they may each find their proper expression. Some time or other we may discover how people are to meet each other on friendly terms without senseless extravagance or squalid meanness, and neither insist upon obsolete notions of propriety nor be insensible to the legitimate claims of decency. But to consider the question at any more length would lead me towards so many tangled political and social problems, that I gladly desist, if I have not already gone too far. We have reformers enough in the world, and each of them rides his own hobby with such amazing vigour that it is to be hoped that they will end by doing something; and that the progress of which we hear so much, and occasionally see something, will not have to be qualified by so many doubts and drawbacks. We feel rather like people who are looking on at one of those eruptions of chaos produced by alterations and improvements in an ancient edifice, and vaguely hoping that when all the dust and confusion has settled down, something more tolerable will come out of it all. Only at present the workmen seem to be rather in want of a superintending architect.

A CYNIC.

A Chinese Commissioner's Foreign Tour.

In the spring of 1866 the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave permission to one of the writers connected with that department to accompany the principal foreign employé in their service on a tour through Europe, with instructions to report upon the condition and aspect of the various countries he should visit. Pin-ch'un, the person thus selected, was a man advanced in years, but having been employed as a writer in the Foreign Inspectorate of Customs, he was less apprehensive of the dangers arising from travel and from unrestricted intercourse with Europeans than the majority of his lettered countrymen. The interest which was manifested by fashionable society in London and Paris during the summer of 1866, on the appearance of the pig-tailed commissioner and his suite, will be remembered by many of the readers of these pages.

Pin-ch'un returned, and presented his report to the Chinese Foreign Office, by whom his exertions were rewarded, it is understood, with a post of some kind in connection with the school of languages. His report has not been made public, and the diary of his travels, in which his experiences were recorded from day to day, has been allowed to circulate in manuscript only. A translation of some portions of this record is now laid before the public. It has been faithfully rendered from the original Chinese, and may be found interesting, if only as a quaint representation of familiar sights and scenes regarded from the point of view of a stranger from the farthest and darkest extremity of Asia.

On the 22nd of February, 1866 (the eighth day of the first moon in the Chinese year), I, Pin-ch'un, Assistant Head-clerk in the Board of Foreign Affairs at Peking, bearing by honorary licence the button of the third official degree, received instructions from the Board of Foreign Affairs, notifying that I had been honoured by imperial commands to travel in the countries of the West, and enjoining that I should compile an accurate record concerning the lands I should visit, and prepare maps (or drawings) with explanatory notes upon the natural features of the same, their condition, climate, and national usages, and bring back the said documents to China, to be put in print for future reference.

13*th*. Engaged passage on board the *Ying-tsze-fei*, which sails tomorrow.

15*th*. Got under way at daybreak. Forty-two *li* * brought us to Taku, where the forts, on either side of the river, present an imposing appearance, as befits the gateway of the Northern Sea. Passed Taku about eight o'clock, but the bar just below proved an impediment to further

* The Chinese *li* is usually reckoned as one-third of a mile.—*Trans.*

progress. The steamer was compelled to wait for high water at 1 P.M., when we were at length able to proceed. The foreigners used an iron weight for ascertaining the depth of water; and in little more than an hour there were eighteen or nineteen feet at the top of the tide, thus enabling us to go on without farther impediment.

17*th*. In the afternoon the wind increased to a gale, and we were much tossed about. Half of those on board were sick. Towards night the wind still further increased, and the rolling and pitching grew worse.

18*th*. The wind gradually fell. Went up into the pilot-house, and took a view around the entire horizon—one vast expanse of sea and sky, a waste of billows without limit in any direction. Many miles off there was a faint thread of smoke to be seen, about two or three inches long. This was pronounced by the captain, after looking at it through a telescope, to be a three-masted steamer. From Taku to this point we have traversed 2,000 *li* of water, and have seen but this one vessel—a proof that it is no light matter to navigate the seas! At 6 P.M. the wind ceased, and we caught sight for the first time of the new moon. In the evening a fog came on, and the vessel was hove to. From Yen-tai to this point we have made 1,500 *li*.

19*th*. Shortly before 6 A.M. the fog lifted; whereupon the anchor was got up, and we proceeded on our way. At 8 A.M. passed Sha-wei Island, and here shifted our course to N.W.* About ten o'clock sighted the entrance to Wusung. From Sha-wei Island to the entrance it is 240 *li*, the whole of which distance lies within the waters of the Yang-tsze-kiang.

A distance of forty *li* from the entrance (at Wusung) brought us to Shanghai. Both banks of the river Hwang-p'u are lined with foreign houses, densely packed together; whilst the view presented by the concourse of sailing-ships and steamers of all sizes is that of an actual forest. The place may well be called the grand emporium for the foreigners of all the seventeen countries of the West.

23*rd*. A beautiful day. At 1 P.M. went on board the French steamer *Labourdonnais*. This vessel is 276 feet long, 30 feet beam, and 18 feet deep. Her capacity is 2,000 tons, of which space her machinery occupies the greater part, taking up 1,200 tons, which leaves only 800 tons for cargo. She carries a captain and 11 officers, 30 seamen, 40 engineers and firemen, 15 stewards, and 6 cooks, making in all 103 persons. There are 40 cabins on board, each accommodating 3 or 4 passengers. The dining-saloon is abaft the mainmast, where a dining-table 60 or 70 feet in length is arranged, giving room for 30 or 40 persons. The utensils of every kind are kept in the highest condition of neatness and cleanliness. Abundance and elegance characterize the service of meals: the dishes are all in the foreign style of cookery, but the majority are highly palatable. After dark the saloon is brilliantly lighted up. There are 15 cabins on either side, and in each cabin two glass lamps are

* This is the point where the Yang-tsze-kiang falls into the sea.

inserted, beside a large toilet-glass, in which the lights are gorgeously reflected. Entering this apartment, one is dazzled with the radiance, and bewildered as though lost in a palatial maze.

Forward of the mainmast are the engine-room and the gallery, with a long passage running on either side, upon which doors open, above each of which a lamp is hung. These are the cabins of the officers and the second-class passengers, numbering forty or fifty in all. The whole is brightly lit up at night. In addition to this, there are galleys, closets, &c., to the number of ten or a dozen separate apartments, all in the highest degree neat and well arranged. The captain studies charts, by which he ascertains localities and distances, and fixes the course and position of the ship by means of astronomical observations. Beside this, there are five compasses on deck, each of which is attended to by two men, for regulating the course of the ship. Soundings are taken by means of a lead, and the rate of speed is ascertained through the agency of a log-line. All other devices in use, such as for ascertaining the temperature or the state of the weather, as also for making sail and moving the rudder, are marvellously skilful. The vessel pursues her course unceasingly day and night; meals are spread in profusion, as though in the heart of a city; and one might think oneself living on shore, so little is there to give the impression of being on a journey. What is most noteworthy of all is that, whereas fresh water is a prime necessary at sea, on board steamers water is obtained through the agency of fire. The motive power of steam is employed to propel the ship, and the steam is then utilized and converted into water for use. Iron pipes are carried all over the ship, through which the water is conducted; and, with hundreds of persons on board, there is no danger of the supply being deficient for drinking or for purposes of ablution.

24*th*. Got under way at 5 A.M. At 10 A.M. passed out of the river and headed for the south.

27*th*. At 8 A.M, reached Hong Kong, the rugged peaks of which were visible from a long distance. The entrance to the harbour is many miles in length, and the appearance of the place, with its ranges of buildings scattered up and down the mountain slope, is in complete contrast to that of Shanghai. At 10 A.M. shifted to another steamer, named the *Cambodge*, a three-decked vessel.

28*th*. A fine warm day. At noon three or four of the officers took observations of the sun by means of instruments, and affirmed that during the 20 hours elapsed since our departure we had run 735 *li* (245 miles). This night the moon shone brilliantly, and the deep-green sea was perfectly still. Leaning against the bulwarks, and gazing into the far distance, I mused tranquilly with far-reaching aspirations.

29*th*. A fine day. Rose at 5 A.M., and saw the mists of the ocean assuming countless fanciful shapes as the sun rose above the horizon. At noon it was ascertained by observation that we had run 1,207 *li* in the past twenty-four hours, and that we were only 1,180 *li* from Saigon. Since

nine o'clock, the mountains and islands of the coast of Cochin-China have been in sight, extending to the westward of us at a distance of about thirty miles. The heat has been intense to-day, and punkahs have been put up on board. Fifteen men are employed in pulling them, and they produce a constant current of air above the seats. Although more than one hundred persons sat down to meals, no inconvenience from heat was felt.

4th. Sailed at 9 A.M. At noon the sky grew overcast, and for the first time a little coolness was experienced. Towards night a heavy thunderstorm came on, but the vessel continued her course as though nothing were the matter. Nothing but a steamship could have done this.

April 9th. At 3 P.M. anchored at Ceylon.

10th. At 7 P.M. the steamer put to sea. Upwards of 170 additional passengers have come on board, and she is crowded to the utmost degree. There are twenty-seven nationalities represented on board, speaking seventeen different tongues, and every man differs from his neighbour in personal appearance and costume. Some were long and lanky, others enormously stout; some with whiskers growing up to the roots of their hair, and long locks dangling loose in the wind. The robes these people wore were for the most part of gaily-tinted cottons, resembling the dresses worn by actors in our melodramas, and others again looked like Tibetan *lamas* about to perform the ceremony of exorcism. The effect produced was very striking and new. The natives of the various European countries, on the other hand, bore an air, in general, of elegance and refinement, and their wives and daughters also were good-looking and attractive. The ladies' costumes, of light silks and gauzy materials, were in particular of the most elegant description. Of a morning they walked arm-in-arm upon deck, or lay down upon couches made of rattan, their husbands waiting upon them all day long, attending like slaves to every beck and call. After breakfast and dinner the husbands and wives would walk up and down arm-in-arm for a hundred steps or so, and when tired would lie down on a couple of chairs drawn close together. The noise of conversation was like that of the twittering of swallows in the eaves, or of a flock of waterfowl alighted for repose. Thus the day slips by in idleness, but without ennui.

16th. Among the passengers on board we had a Mohammedan from India, who was bound on a pilgrimage to the tomb of the founder of his faith, in the Turkish dominions, but since coming on board he has been confined to bed by illness, and this morning he was gathered to rest. When passengers die on board ship, their corpses are weighted with stones and cast into the sea. The captain, on examining the effects of the deceased, found a will, bequeathing 40,000*l.* to his son, whose place of residence was mentioned. I felt much emotion on hearing of the occurrence. Mr. Hart * asked me to compose some poetry, and I indited

* This is the first mention Pin makes of his travelling companions from China. The gentleman above named was the patron to whom Pin owed his nomination for the journey; and he was accompanied, besides, by two interpreters from the Customs service, Messrs. Bowra and Deschamps.—*Trans.*

a stanza in pentameter verse. Toward midnight we passed an island, near which, I was told, sudden and unaccountable gales often spring up. From Hong Kong to this point I have travelled tens of thousands of *li* across the boundless ocean, but wind and waves have been propitious and calm, and I have been able each day to make my notes in the full-formed character. All my fellow-travellers have suffered, and as for myself the enjoyment of such comfort on this mission, taking me for the first time in my life upon the seas, can be due to no other cause than the favouring fortunes of the Sacred Son of Heaven!

18*th*. Arrived at Aden at noon. On the right hand a range of mountains extends for many miles, through which an entrance is formed resembling a gateway, and the vessel takes up her anchorage in a land-locked harbour. The hills are rugged and fantastic in outline, showing mile after mile of precipitous peaks, all utterly devoid of vegetation. On shore there are a dozen or so of mud-built houses, occupied as barracks for the English troops, and for storing coal for the use of the ocean steamers. The distance from Ceylon to this point is 6,400 and odd *li*, and without a settlement of this kind there would be a difficulty in coaling and watering vessels. It is for this reason that the British have stationed troops at this spot, commanding the highway from east to west, and made it a depôt for necessaries. The undertaking is a highly useful one. The place itself, however, produces absolutely nothing. Everything that is required in the way of live stock, provisions, and coal has to be imported from abroad Sailed at 11 P.M.

22*nd*. A fine day. Our run at noon was 729 *li*. At 3 P.M. sighted a lofty tower rising in the midst of the sea. On approaching, saw that it is built in seven stories, and rises to a height of more than 100 feet. It is constructed of iron, and a red flag is displayed on the summit. One of the persons on board told me that this building is placed where it stands in order to mark the position of a shoal. Persons are stationed within, who hoist a flag when a vessel comes in sight, and display a light after dark, in order that navigators may be warned to keep at a distance. This is, indeed, a most excellent undertaking.

24*th*. Anchored at Suez shortly after midnight. Rose at 4 A.M., and at 6 A.M. we were transferred, with our luggage, to a small steamer, which conveyed us a distance of three or four miles to the landing-place. Went to the hotel, a building with lofty and handsome rooms. Tables were spread in four rows, giving seats for 150 persons, and meals are served precisely as on board the steamer, except that wine has to be paid for as ordered. While we were breakfasting, loud sounds of music were heard. The performers were eight in number, male and female, and the instruments upon which they played were of very singular forms, but the music was not unpleasing. I found, on inquiry, that these persons were Germans. Three of the women passed round the tables with glass dishes in their hands, and each guest gave them one or two pieces of silver money. A number of airs having been played, the women sang. Their voices were pure and well-modulated, and the effect produced was really agreeable.

The music was kept up for a couple of hours or more. At 3 P.M. we took our places in the railway-train. The vehicles in front comprise the engine, burning coal and putting the wheels in motion by means of the water contained [in the boiler]; and to this the remaining carriages are attached in succession, to the number of thirty or forty, as the case may be. Each carriage is like the room of a house, and is divided into three compartments, to each of which there is a door. On entering, seats are found ranged along either side, each seat giving room for eight or nine persons. Above and below the seats there are spaces where some dozens of articles of passengers' luggage can be stowed away. Each compartment has six glass windows, to keep out the draughts and glare of the sun; they can be opened and closed at will. The carriages are handsomely painted, and fitted with well-filled, luxurious cushions. One can sit or lie down, eat and drink, get up and look out right and left, exactly as one chooses. The carriages next in order convey the luggage, and those last of all accommodate several camels and horses. The train does not start until after a bell has been rung three times. For the first few paces the motion is gradual and easy, but after this it becomes like "the speed of a galloping horse, whom no one can stop." The houses, trees, hills, and roads by the side of the train fly past so swiftly that they are scarcely perceived by the eye. After a time the train stops, and in the village by the roadside there is a building, to which all the passengers, male and female, repair to purchase refreshments. The master of the establishment is a Mohammedan, and on the walls there are painted images of Buddha, and sundry [figures of] dragons and other monsters, huge fishes, and wild beasts are hung up all over the place, together with five or six pictures in frames, representing Chinese theatrical scenes. After taking refreshment, we again got in motion, under the light of a brilliant moon. After travelling for another couple of hours, towards 8 P.M. groves of trees began to show themselves by the wayside, and houses to become more and more frequent. We were approaching Cairo, the capital of Egypt. In four hours we had effected a land journey of 278 *li* (93 miles). Proceeded to the inn, which was brilliantly lighted up, with meals ready prepared. The apartments were neat, and beautifully arranged. Retired to rest at midnight. At length, after a sea voyage of a month's duration, I am on shore again, and able, for the first time, to undress.

25*th*. At 4 A.M. packed up some provisions, and having engaged a carriage drove out in a north-westerly direction. After driving for three or four miles crossed a small river. My companions hired six donkeys, which they put to speed on reaching the further bank. The donkeys are very fine animals, and would outrun a horse. A distance of three or four miles farther on we arrived at the tombs of the ancient kings, of which there are three in close proximity to each other. The tomb lying to the north is of immense size. According to the descriptions given of it, it occupies an area of five *li*, and its summit attains an altitude of 500 feet; and this I believe to be no exaggeration. The structure is

square below and rises to a point (pyramidal), and is entirely composed of blocks of limestone. The larger blocks measure perhaps five or six feet in height by seven or eight feet in breadth. On the north face there is a cavernous passage winding into the interior, through which visitors are led by the native guides, waving lights in front. In the narrowest places there is barely room for a man to pass. The passage winds from side to side, now up and now down, in the densest obscurity, and with many steep and dangerous inclines. In the centre a stone trough is met with, which, on being struck, gives forth a ringing sound. This is said to be an ancient sarcophagus. The [vault] where the passage debouches is upwards of 100 feet in height, and here, on a slab of stone, there is an inscription in ten columns, comprising about 100 characters, resembling those of the ancient bells and vases (found in China). About one-third of the inscription can be distinguished, but the remainder has perished under the corroding influences of time, and is wholly undecipherable. Some connoisseur should take a rubbing of the characters and bring it to China for the purpose of instituting a minute comparison with the inscriptions of our own ancient monuments in stone and bronze. They might then be deciphered without difficulty, and the period from which they date be accurately ascertained. Although inscriptions also exist on both sides of the internal passage, both above and below, still the characters here seen all belong to the European alphabets; and that the one above referred to actually dates from the period of the Three Dynasties in China,* and is no forgery, may be positively asserted. At the foot of the mountain (pyramid) there is a huge block of stone, chiselled in the form of a tank, apparently an unfinished labour of antiquity. Beside it a huge block stands upright, which is sculptured in the likeness of a head of Buddha, resembling the image at the Ta-fuh-sze (Grand Monastery of Buddha) at the Lake of Hang-chow. It is a sight worth seeing. The natives brought ancient coins and stone figures from the places of sepulture for sale to the visitors.

26*th*. Set out again at 9 A.M. Passed on the road two railway-carriages, gorgeously decorated with gilding, which were said to be the royal carriages. The train pursued a north-westerly course, and as the season was that of harvest the country presented a vast expanse of ripened grain, like yellow clouds. The method of reaping and gathering in the corn, of ploughing and harrowing, pursued by the peasants of the country, resembles in the main the system in China. The speed of the train was now greater than before, and the sensation was precisely that of flying through the air. At 2 P.M. we arrived at Alexandria, a distance of 489 *li*, and embarked on board a small steamer, which conveyed us to the Mediterranean boat. The latter took her departure immediately. She is smaller than the *Cambodge*, and somewhat differently constructed, but her saloon is of superior size. Three long tables are spread, which will accommodate 150 or 160 passengers, and windows open on either side, the spaces between being

* The period extending from B.C. 2200 to B.C. 300.

occupied by fine paintings. The saloon is lighted at night by forty-four lamps, rivalling daylight in the illumination they produce.

Since leaving the Red Sea the temperature has grown cooler by degrees, and in the morning and evening warm clothing is necessary. Some even put on furs.

May 2nd. At 1 P. M. arrived at Marseilles, where the Custom-house exempted our baggage from search. Took a carriage to the hotel. The streets are bustling and crowded, the houses all six or seven stories in height, with highly-decorated fronts and ornamental balconies, towering up into the very clouds. After darkness falls, the lamplight makes them as bright as by day, even in the lesser byways. No rambler by night need carry his own lantern in his hand! It is stated that the population amounts to 500,000 souls. There is an endless succession of streets, and the twinkling lights of the shops, crowded together like the stars of the firmament, present a spectacle such as the new-year's night illuminations elsewhere * cannot vie with either in beauty or extent. The splendour of the gas-lamps is a spectacle in itself. The hotel is seven stories in height, with a staircase in a spiral form; but in order to avoid the inconvenience of frequent ascents, there is, in addition, a small apartment, accommodating seven or eight persons, which by means of a large revolving wheel is hoisted to the top of the building. Each room is provided with a covered indicator of intelligence (bell), through which it is known at once in the office that attendance is called for in that particular room. For transmitting messages there is also a marvellous contrivance. All these devices are very wonderful. The bedding and furniture in general are all elegant in the extreme.

3rd. Went by railway to see the place where marine engines are manufactured, which lies at a distance of about thirty miles from the hotel, but the time occupied in the trip was barely over four hours. The train passed under ten or a dozen hills (through tunnels), of which five were of great length. These passages are all like deep caverns, some one and some two miles or so in length. The train whirls into pitchy blackness as it enters the tunnel, but every one of the carriages, some score or more in number, is lighted by lamps. After a few moments the daylight on the other side begins to appear, and we emerge once more. The vegetation in the open country was very pretty. The bridges and roads all in good repair. Wheat was just in the green ear. In the afternoon visited some gardens near the seashore. At 3 P.M. set out in the train and travelled a distance of 283 miles. It was only 8 P.M. when we arrived at our destination, Lyons, where the streets, resplendent with lamplight as if it were broad day, were even twice as bustling as at Marseilles.

7th. At Paris. The Custom-house passed our luggage without examination. The streets are bustling and gay, and in airiness and breadth are finer again than those of Lyons. I am informed that at the

* *i. e.* in China.

latter place the population is 600,000, whilst at Paris it is upwards of 1,000,000. There are 300,000 troops [in the country], and in every street and thoroughfare [sentries] are seen stationed, clad in dark uniforms (*lit.:* black coats) with red trousers, standing erect with a weapon (staff) in their hands. There is a constant succession of police passing to and fro, all wearing bright new uniforms, not a single one in shabby or worn clothing! One unceasing rattle arises from the traffic of vehicles, and the multitudes of foot-passengers may be compared to swarms of ants; but all is tranquil, nevertheless, and no confusion prevails. Unquestionably, it is a land of politeness and good order.

8*th*. M. de Méritens, of the [Chinese] Customs (at home on leave), accompanied me to a public establishment where drawings were being made having reference to dwellings in the style of various countries about to be erected at Paris. Also went to a vast building of glass, 300 feet in height and large in proportion. It contains a countless number of fine paintings, very triumphs of pictorial art. After this, proceeded two or three miles to the westward, where the Government gardens stand. It is quite beyond my power to do justice to the rich display of botanical treasures, and the wonders of the animal kingdom, which are to be seen at this place; but what is most remarkable is that all the most curious among the scaly and finny tribes of the seas are reared in confinement here, separately lodged according to their species in glass compartments, accompanied by aquatic plants and marine rocks, presenting a complete tableau of the denizens of ocean! Some scores of rare specimens of crustacea are kept alive here in some twenty or thirty different compartments, and visitors are able to inspect most minutely these creeping things of the waters—a most remarkable sight indeed! In the evening I went to the theatre, which was not over until midnight. The subject of the play referred wholly to scenes of ancient times. The size of the stage (*lit.:* room) was such as to give space for 200 or 300 persons, with representations of natural scenery and houses or apartments changing and dissolving instantaneously. The eye is dazzled by the splendour of the gay costumes that are worn. Fifty or sixty females, actresses, made their appearance on the stage, of whom one-half were noticeable for good looks, the great majority being nude to the extent of half their persons, and took part in the performance as dancers. During the progress of the play, natural scenery accompanied by cascades, with the sun and moon, alternately shining and obscured, was represented, whilst figures of the gods or crowds of fairies were seen descending from on high, amidst a dazzling halo of light, forming an inconceivably marvellous spectacle. Those present in the theatre, to the number of more than a thousand, joined unanimously in applauding it by clapping their hands.

10*th*. Called upon the British and United States' Ministers, who are respectively stationed at Paris. In the evening went to a theatre to see equestrian performances, which I found superior to Chinese horse-racing. A female performer danced upon a horse's back, and while the animal was

racing at full speed she jumped through a hoop and alighted again upon the saddle. Another individual made a horse stand up and dance on his hind-legs; beside which there was an iron cage produced, larger than an ordinary room, which was rolled upon wheels into the arena, and in which five lions were confined. Their roaring boomed in the ear like the reverberation of a deep-toned bell. A man entered the cage and engaged in combat with these beasts, using a sword and rapier, and discharging a fire-arm. The angry roaring of the lions made every spectator hold his breath.

18*th*. Left the hotel about eight o'clock, and set off by train. After a journey of 210 miles, arrived by one o'clock at the port of Boulogne, where we embarked on board a steamer for a sea-transit of some 25 miles, arriving about 4 P.M. at the British port of Dover. Taking train again, travelled a further distance of 83 miles, and at 7 P.M. entered our hotel in London, the English capital.

19*th*. Mr. Hart, the Inspector-General of [Chinese] Customs, came to see me, and during the day I also received visits from Messrs. Dick, Hughes, and Hannen, of the Customs service, who spoke of the vast population of London, exceeding 3,000,000 souls, and of the insular position of the country, owing to which an army of some 100,000 men, and a navy numbering no more than 60,000 seamen, are sufficient for defensive purposes; quite unlike France, whose frontier on three sides adjoins that of neighbouring countries. In France, accordingly, a larger army is required, and in case of war some hundreds of thousands of men can be put in the field. The metropolis is fifteen miles in diameter, with a densely crowded population. The houses and other buildings present a fine appearance, and are, for the most part, four or five stories in height. The streets are clean, and absolutely thronged with vehicles and foot-passengers. Of all cities of the West, this is by far the largest capital. The uniform of the military seen in the streets is a red coat and black trousers, perfect neatness prevailing in every part of their attire and equipments. The horses they ride are of imposing size. Each man patrols his beat unceasingly, with his weapon in his hand.

24*th*. Went to have my likeness taken. In the afternoon called upon the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Clarendon, and upon Mr. Hammond. Later, went to see an Academy,* where the portraits, figures, and landscapes exhibited display singular excellence in the art. The European newspapers have had the report as far back as two months ago that a Chinese commissioner was on his way, and numbers of persons consequently ask to see me and to have my likeness. At the establishment where I was photographed in Paris, crowds of people strove to get copies, and I am told that as much as fifteen francs were paid for a copy of the portrait. It has already been a source of great profit to the artist, just as with us, fans from the hand of a noted painter are sought after.

25*th*. Cloudy. Visited the great gardens [at Kew], where there are

* Exhibition of the Royal Academy.

azaleas more than ten feet in height, and roses also as high as five or six feet, covered with blossoms, in vast profusion, forming a rich display of varied colour and fragrance. I was told that plants brought from China are tended here with care and successfully propagated. In general, the abundance and beauty of the floral display excels everything of the kind in Europe. The artificial water here is very fine, and the glass-houses and aviaries a most rare sight.

In the evening went to the Tea Gardens [Cremorne] and saw theatrical displays, divinely wonderful beyond conception.

26*th*. Visited the Custom-house, where the annual receipts, I learn, amount to 26,000,000*l*. sterling. Also visited the tea-warehouses, containing three million chests of tea, all showing Chinese marks, beside one million barrels of wine, stored in underground vaults. These vaults are of great extent, and we burnt out ten or more candles before our visit was over. The atmosphere is powerfully impregnated with vinous exhalations, yielding an agreeable perfume to the senses. If Yüan Tseih * could be brought hither he would certainly exclaim: "Bury me here when I die, and spare yourselves the trouble of following me with a mattock!" Also visited the Mint, where gold, silver, and copper are coined by machinery, without manual labour,—a process singularly skilful and effective.

27*th*. Travelled into the country by train in a north-westerly direction, accomplishing a distance of thirty miles in three-quarters of an hour, to visit a camp of instruction [Aldershot]. Called upon the General in command, and afterwards witnessed divers military exercises. The soldiers' quarters occupy an area some three miles around, and 8,000 men are stationed here. The musketry-practice and manœuvres were executed with uniform precision. In the afternoon, lunched with the General.

28*th*. Visited the Zoological Gardens, and had a sight of tigers, leopards, bears, lions, elephants, serpents, dragons, and denizens of the waters,—in fact, every kind of creature, with strange birds and monstrous fishes, such as, in very truth, "eye hath not seen nor ear heard." This is considered the most extensive menagerie in existence.

31*st*. Was invited to-night by the Minister of State, Earl Russell, to present myself to his lady, who was very gracious. There was a large gathering of ladies of rank and distinction, filling the rooms with gorgeous apparel. Some of the ladies played upon the piano and sang, making the air resound with vocal music, the effect of which was very pleasing. Methought Tung Shwang-ch'êng † had descended from the halls of fairy-land and come to London.

June 1*st*. Cloudy, and a slight drizzle. Visited the ancient cathedral

* Yüan Tseih is one of the seven wine-bibbing worthies of Chinese history and romance. He died A.D. 263. As the professor of an epicurean philosophy, which ridiculed the formal ceremonies of the prevailing orthodoxy, he was accustomed to say, "Let me die drinking, and shovel me into my grave!"—*Trans.*

† This is the name of one of the fairy attendants of Si Wang Mu, the Titania of the Chinese.—*Trans.*

[Westminster Abbey], which rises to a height of 120 feet, supported by pillars of stone and vaulted arches of immense height. The workmanship is of the most elaborate kind, but it has suffered much from the ravages of time during its existence of upwards of 1,000 years. The ancient sovereigns and statesmen are interred within this edifice, and are represented by lifelike effigies in stone. About 4 P.M. visited the Houses of Parliament (*lit:* the hall of public deliberation), an edifice lofty and magnificent beyond compare. The various districts of the country elect 600 persons to deliberate [here] on public affairs. In the evening went to the theatre. The performance was inconceivably marvellous.

June 2nd. This morning visited Woolwich, eight miles distant to the south-west, where the brother of General Gordon is superintendent of the Arsenal, which he invited me to inspect. Lunched at his official residence, and composed a couple of sonnets in pentameter during the repast.

4th. A fine day. Visited what is called the Palace of Crystal, lying eight miles south of the metropolis. The palace stands on a hill, in a very lofty situation, and consists in two great halls, two-thirds of a mile high and a mile in breadth.* There is a tower at either end, that on the north being eleven stories in height, and 400 feet in altitude. The whole is constructed of glass, and when seen from a distance it glitters like one mass of crystal. In the interior, the dwellings and architecture of various countries are represented, with effigies of their respective inhabitants and birds and beasts. The director of the palace did the honours and led me through the whole place, and supplied me, besides, with a small carriage to obviate the necessity of walking. Within and without, brightness reigns on every side; and from the balconies a view extending over twenty miles of country is obtained. I was next invited to the building where guests are entertained—a smaller, three-storied edifice, elegantly fitted-up. The arcade leading to it is completely closed in with glass, and the covered ways surrounding [the house] were gay with purple creepers in full bloom. The peonies and azaleas were larger than those in China; and beside these flowers a variety of other plants were scattered here and there, forming, with the verdure with which the ground was carpeted, a lovely combination of divers hues. A lady offered us refreshments (*lit.:* tea and wine), and brought out books of pictures for our inspection. Our reception here was exceedingly hospitable.

5th. Cloudy. At 10 A.M. set out by rail for Windsor Castle, the Queen's country palace, about seventeen miles off. The edifice is lofty and of great extent; it is said, indeed, to contain 3,600 (?) separate apartments, and is, in all, of three stories in height. It may well be said, therefore, to be a structure of "broad halls and countless chambers." A custodian of the palace acted as our guide through the various apartments, which contain a great abundance of precious objects. I noticed

* Some confusion seems to exist here between the palace and the hill on which it stands.—*Trans.*

a vase of green jade-stone,* six or seven feet in height, covered with the richest veinings, resembling the plumage of a peacock, and dazzlingly lustrous. This I was told was a present from the sovereign of Russia. It does not yield the palm, in good sooth, to the "coral branch seven feet long." Beside this, various rooms are set apart for precious articles from different countries, all separately arranged, and among the number I noticed a volume of botanical drawings, and a fan inscribed with three heptameter stanzas from the poems entitled *Liu Hiang Tseih*, both of which I recognized as Chinese. The walls of the palace are hung with paintings by celebrated masters, and in richness and elegance of its furniture and decorations it stands at the head of everything in the West. The park embraces an area of ten miles in circuit, and the honour was done me of placing a carriage and horses from the royal stables at my disposal for a drive through the domain. Some of the trees are of stupendous size, and are more than a century old. The prospect is diversified by gently undulating hills, and by winding rivulets and streams, amid which the belling of the deer is heard mingling with a flood of melody from feathered songsters. The most delicate and exquisite kinds of flowers are cultivated in glass houses, with windows which may be opened and shut at pleasure to guard them against the effects of wind or sun. The superintendent of the gardens informed me that in consequence of the coldness of the climate this precaution is necessary, and without it the plants would be killed by frosts. Taking a walk inside this building I was charmed by the rich display of colour and gratified by the subtle perfumes exhaled around. Among the flowers which I recognized were specimens of the Cydonia Japonica, some two or three feet in height, of most symmetrical beauty. The red and white camellias resembling those grown in the province of Kiangsi, the roses, azaleas, peonies, tulips, &c., were all double the size of what we have in China. I also visited the fruit-houses, which are similarly constructed. Here some score or more of buildings are occupied with peaches, plums, and almonds, beside graperies. In all these places, it appears, hot water is laid on in brass pipes, which maintain an equable warmth in the building, resembling the temperature which prevails in China towards the end of spring. Of the fruit-trees, some were just flowering, others only just in bud, some with the fruit formed and others again in full bearing, thus providing, as I was informed, a constant succession of fruit for use as required. A bunch of purple grapes was plucked for me, the clustering fruit of which equalled birds' eggs in size, but fully ripe, and of most exquisite flavour.

In the stables [I saw] the royal horses, some of which stand eight feet in height. There are also eight small carriage-ponies, resembling the ponies of the west of China, which are driven by the Queen herself. The high carriage in which I was driven whirled along with the rapidity of lightning,

* Malachite is probably meant.—*Trans.*

and in a couple of hours I had traversed every corner of the domain. I was reminded of the verse in Li Ch'ang-ke's poems, where he says:—

> In the favouring airs of Spring, swift my courser speeds his way!
> All the blooming sights of Ch'áng-ngan* I will witness in a day!

I also visited the great college (Eton), where the director of studies invited me to partake of refreshments. On returning in the evening, I dined by invitation with the Marquis (or Earl) M——, at his public residence, where a feast of the most *recherché* character was given; and towards midnight I proceeded to the same nobleman's private residence, where a great gathering of ladies, not less than from one to two hundred, was assembled. The lady [of the house] was stationary in the midst of a forest of gorgeously apparelled guests, and the introductions left not a moment's leisure.

6*th*. Early this morning an officer of the palace sent a card stating he was commanded by the Queen to invite [us] to a State ball and banquet, specifying half-past ten o'clock P.M. as the time. The officers accompanying me and the interpreters were to go also, and dresses of ceremony were worn [by the interpreters] with swords. Our preparations were not completed until evening, and at the appointed time we proceeded together to the palace. On alighting from our carriage at the gateway we saw some hundred or more of troops under arms, and drawn up in rank. They were all dressed in scarlet. After passing through the doorway we discerned a line of officers, drawn up, erect and motionless, holding halberds in their hands. At each doorway four of these were stationed. After entering, and turning to the left, we traversed a long corridor, making four or five turns. The whole was flooded with a blaze of light, the marble pavements richly carpeted, and both sides of the staircase lined with flowering plants in bloom, the perfume from which impregnated the entire atmosphere. The lamps shone with such splendour that not a nook or cranny was left unilluminated. The flight of stairs we ascended numbered more than a hundred steps, and was crowded with a continuous stream of ladies of rank proceeding to the presence-chamber. It is the ceremonial usage that a court is held by the Queen twice during each month. Following our guide, we passed through one room after another, until at length we reached the ball-room. The size of this apartment is about fifty or sixty feet† in breadth by more than one hundred in length. It is, moreover, upwards of fifty feet in height. From the ceiling, and on all sides of the room, there are hung lamps with glass shades, to the number of 8,560 (?) burners altogether.

Of late years, the Queen has held but few receptions, and the heir-apparent and his consort have been commissioned to discharge on her behalf the courtesies of State entailed by foreign intercourse. There

* One of the most celebrated among the ancient capitals of China.—*Trans.*

† If the writer is reckoning by Chinese measurement, this passage should read, "seventy or eighty feet," as the *chang* of ten Chinese feet is equal to fourteen feet English.—*Trans.*

were present at court this evening four hundred of the nobility and high functionaries of the Government, besides eight or nine hundred ladies of rank and position. The Prince and Princess sat facing the south, with seats arranged on either side of them, in three gradations. All the guests in attendance may stand or sit down as they please. I had a place opposite together with my companions. A band was stationed in a gallery, and the male and female guests went through some ten or a dozen dances. Officers of the army were in scarlet uniforms, and civilians in black coats, in all cases ornamented with gold embroidery. The ladies wore dresses of a variety of colours, red, green, &c., with bare shoulders, arms, and bosoms. They wore clusters of jewels and diamonds upon their heads—a gorgeous array of ornament literally dazzling to the sight! This spectacle is the *ne plus ultra* of elegance, luxury, and abundance! At midnight the Prince and Princess left their seats and repaired to another saloon, when the whole assemblage stood still, forming ranks on either side. Shortly afterwards a palace official brought word that the Prince had invited me to see him, and I forthwith went [to be introduced]. The Prince and Princess both stood up, and put questions to me, such as—What did I think of the appearance of this country? It was a pity China is so far off, so that travelling backward and forward is not easy; had I enjoyed a comfortable voyage? Was I pleased with my visit to the Royal park yesterday? The Princess asked me how the climate of China was in comparison with that of England; and whether I had been pleased with the places I had seen. To all these questions I made answer, in addition to which I also said:—"Envoys from China have never as yet reached your honourable country; and now having been ordained to travel abroad, I have learnt for the first time that such beautiful lands exist beyond our seas. Moreover, by the extremely gracious welcome accorded to me by the Queen and your Royal Highness, I feel honoured in an unparalleled measure." Hereupon the Prince and Princess, both smiling, permitted me to withdraw, for the purpose of proceeding to the banqueting-room, where a profusion of costly wines and elegant viands was laid out. The servitors of the entertainment, decked in gold lace, carried trays about, moreover, and handed refreshments to the guests. I almost fancied I had been transported bodily to the Lake of Gems in heaven, that the crowd around me were the golden-armoured Gods, or the Immortals of fairy-land,* and that I had bid farewell to the world below!

A message came shortly with the Queen's commands that I should repair to the palace on the following afternoon to be presented to her Majesty. It was near morning when I got back to the hotel.

* In the above complimentary outburst, the narrator ingeniously combines the various Chinese and Buddhist legendary ideas of celestial magnificence into one picture. The Lake of Gems is the fabled abode of the "Queen of the Fairies," Si Wang Mu; the golden-armoured Gods are the attendants of India in the Buddhist pantheon; whilst the immortals are part of the Taoist mythology.—*Trans.*

7th. A fine day. At about 3 P.M. I arrived at the palace gateway. Guards were drawn up inside and out the same as last evening, with the addition of a band numbering some scores of performers, clad in scarlet uniforms. A palace official, decorated with gold lace, led me to an apartment where I seated myself to await the summons to the Royal presence. At three o'clock several officers of the Household made their appearance, and led me through one door after another into the presence-chamber. The Queen was standing facing the doorway, and on entering the apartment I drew myself up in a respectful attitude, and offered an expression of homage (*lit.:* of grateful feelings). The Queen asked me how long I had been in this country—and how I liked what I had seen, everything being so different from the manners and customs of China. I replied, saying that I had already been here a fortnight, and that in what I had seen of the buildings of London, and the various kinds of machinery in use, the skill and excellence of workmanship displayed were in advance of China, whilst, in respect to matters of government and administration, I had found much to admire. I added that I felt honoured beyond measure by the gracious treatment vouchsafed to me by the Queen, through which I had been enabled to enjoy the sight of her beautiful domains. The Queen deigned to reply saying that she hoped after my return to China, on the termination of my travels, the concord and amity prevailing between the two countries might be still further increased. I bowed profoundly, testifying my homage, and withdrew.

I cannot help feeling that for a mere traveller like myself to have been favoured with repeated manifestations of distinguished courtesy, and to have had an interview vouchsafed and condescending expressions addressed to me, is an honour of the very highest degree.

8th. Cloudy. Left the hotel at half-past 9 A.M., and at 10 o'clock took the train and travelled sixty miles northward to Oxford, where I visited several great colleges. An elegant luncheon was laid before us; and at 3 P.M. we went on to Birmingham, another journey of sixty miles. It is the custom in England for each town to elect an individual as director of the local affairs, like the "prefects" in our own ancient system. There was here a [gentleman] named Y——, occupying the office in question, who, having heard I was to visit the place, received me with great attention, invited me to dinner, and accompanied me on a tour through all the manufacturing establishments.

13th. Arrived at London at 5 A.M. The streets begin to be familiar, and on returning to our previous lodgings in Cha-urh-sze Sze-ti-li-ti (Charles Street), the landlady of the (United) Hotel and the attendants all welcomed us like old acquaintances. The flowers in the vases looked smilingly at the guests, and the bird in its cage chirruped its note of recognition. Truly is it said in Tu Yew's poems:

K'iüan ying tsêng suh k'êh.

(The dog goes forth to greet the stranger who has once slept in the house).

Our rooms are on the third story, and are tolerably lofty and airy.

The dining-room is an elegantly furnished apartment, different from the one we first occupied. This hotel ranks as one of the second class, yet it is five stories in height, with some dozens of rooms on each floor. At night, it is brilliantly illuminated, not a single landing or winding gallery left unprovided with a flood of light, which is continued throughout the whole night. There are some ten or more large dining-rooms, and upwards of 130 bedrooms. In every apartment there is a means of communication for summoning attendants fixed on the wall. By pressing this with the finger, it is made known immediately in the office that a servant is summoned to such-and-such a room on such-and-such a floor. In the bath-room there are two brass pipes, from which the water flows. One pipe furnishes hot water, the other cold, the quantity of which may be regulated at pleasure. In all these arrangements, all establishments are fitted up alike.

14*th*. Fine. Settled the dates for our journey to Holland and other countries. The Secretary of State, Ka (the Earl of Clarendon), invited me to an interview with him in the afternoon, when, in addition to other conversation, he stated that the Queen had spoken approvingly of me, and also that, being aware I was about to visit other countries, he had been good enough to send communications notifying the fact, in order that wherever I went I might find hospitable entertainers. This is kindness and attention for which one should certainly feel grateful. Went next to the Earl of T.'s, where a large party of distinguished guests were invited, and where the lady of the house treated me with the utmost hospitality. After a time we repaired to the garden, and looked on while the lady visitors played at ball (croquet), during which time music was discoursed by a band. The assemblage of elegant toilettes was truly a a sight to behold!

20*th*. Rain. The Duke of P. invited us to a public assembly to witness a ball. The number of guests of both sexes was considerable (*lit.*: exceeded several tens). All the officials present wore their court uniforms, the same as at the palace entertainment. It was 2 A.M. when I got back to the hotel. The majority of the guests, it was stated, were Scottish, and of the ladies two or three in every ten had white hair, though their faces were youthful and blooming. In answer to my inquiries I was told that the hair was artificially whitened. One not conversant with the fact might almost have taken youthful matrons for grandmothers!

22*nd*. Mr. B. of the Crystal Palace invited us to see the fountains. The landscape scenery and grottoes which they went through with us were very pretty sights. Returned home after a dinner in the evening. It was close upon midnight when we got back. On this day we saw a native of the province of Hu-peh, not more than three feet high, and also a man from Ngan-hevei, eight or nine feet in height—both remarkable specimens of humanity. A foreigner has brought them for a tour in this country.

23*rd*. Fine. At 9 A.M. embarked on board a steamer and left port for Holland.

The Theatre in Mediæval Paris.

Authorities are not agreed as to the source of the modern theatre. Some derive it from the Greeks of the Lower Empire; others assert that the idea of instructing the people in Bible story by means of dramatic representations was suggested to the mediæval Churchmen by the study of Plautus and Terence; and many attribute the origin of moralities and mysteries to the pilgrims. The poorer of these *bien heureux faisceants* (blessed idlers), as an old author terms them, were, say they, in the habit of helping themselves along by singing rude rhymes descriptive of the lives and actions of the saints. And, they add, these rhymes gradually grew into a kind of drama, which the pilgrims found it profitable to exhibit at the church-doors. These opinions may be all equally true, or equally false. For the drama is one of those matters that spring up spontaneously when society has attained a certain position. The Spanish conquerors of America, for instance, found something similar to a drama among the Mexicans and Peruvians. So did the early navigators among the Pacific islanders. And certainly none of these peoples had ever dipped into Plautus or Terence, or taken a hint from the Byzantines.

Of one thing, however, there cannot be a doubt—the mediæval theatre in its origin was exclusively religious. Its first dramas, the Mysteries, were not exactly such wretched things as they are generally described. Critics persist in appraising them by the dialogue alone, which is unfair; and even this dialogue they judge in a partisan spirit, which is still more unfair. It may be admitted, indeed, that the dialogue of the Mystery was far from being perfect; that, in fact, it treated sacred things with a great deal of freedom, and that it frequently included very objectionable scenes. Three such are now before us. One of them purporting to represent the crucifixion reproduces with unquestionable fidelity the ribaldry that rioted round the ordinary gibbet in that age of superlative coarseness and cruelty. Another introduces Satan reproving his baffled imps, who retort in similar and thoroughly diabolical strain. And the third depicts the First Person in the Trinity as interrogated and replying in terms that we hesitate to cite, even in the original antique French. Within the narrow compass of six lines, or thereabout, the author contrives to be as offensive as he possibly could be to modern notions of propriety. He reduces heaven to the level of the mob, and causes its tenants to think and speak precisely as the small traders and artificers of his day. But this kind of thing was the least portion of the dialogue; and the dialogue itself, though sufficiently lengthy—often numbering 50,000, 60,000, and even 70,000 lines—was the least portion of the Mystery.

The scenery, the machinery, and the grouping of the characters were matters much more studied and admired. Indeed, the Mystery was always and emphatically what those who delighted in it termed it by preference—a spectacle; and, after due consideration, we feel bound to add, a magnificent one. It was seldom got through in less than three days—we have seen the programme of one that occupied twenty—and the actors formed quite an army. We have counted 189 different characters in a single piece, and the number was frequently larger. Nor was this at all extraordinary. The subject seldom ranged over less than the four Gospels or half-a-dozen books of the Old Testament, and the playwrights considered themselves at full liberty to add as many characters and as much incident as they pleased. Then the scenery was a show in itself. It represented everything from paradise to pandemonium, was thoroughly substantial, skilfully designed, and carefully finished to the smallest particular. As much may be said of the properties and the machinery. There were serpents that wriggled by clockwork and monsters that vomited flame; one of the latter being described as a great red dragon, with eyes of polished steel, that leapt upon the stage and disgorged quite a stream of lively little demons. There were many-coloured fires, abundant squibs, and even clouds that floated in and burst with what Leigh Hunt calls "a thunderous smother." As to the acting, that, too, was all spectacle. There was a great deal of dancing of a complicated character,—every dance being supposed to tell a story and convey a moral. There was a great display of agility, much singing, more nudity, and an infinity of sensational situation. Every group, too, was arranged with a care that extended to all the adjuncts. And thus the various scenes of the Mystery formed as many living pictures, which furnished excellent models to the painters of the era, and doubtless did much to produce the rapid progress and early perfection of their art.

Such was the Mystery in its prime: that is, when exhibited by the guilds as the principal feature of their holiday revels. On these occasions, which coincided with the greater festivals of the Church, it was usual for several guilds to unite in the production of the show. This, it will be understood, was an undertaking involving much time and trouble, and not a little expenditure. And here we may remark that the Mystery was popular for reasons apart from its scenic attractions. It was looked upon as stimulating trade, and therefore expected by the working-classes and encouraged by the authorities, who seldom objected to aid its conductors by a grant from the municipal funds. The wealthier classes also contributed liberally to the exhibition, to which spectators were admitted gratis down to the close of the fourteenth century. Then the confraternity of the Passion, a permanent theatre, and money-takers at the doors, made their appearance together.

Early in 1398 a number of Parisian citizens undertook to play the mystery of the Passion, which meant the whole Gospel history, "for the good of their souls, and the glory of the faith"—and a trifling remunera-

tion: two sous a head,—at St. Maur, two leagues from the metropolis. The speculation succeeded, and the company reaped a rich harvest. The prévôt of Paris, however, startled by such an unheard-of proceeding, lost no time in issuing a proclamation forbidding any resident within his jurisdiction to attend the exhibition without the licence of the King. The Parisians grumbled but obeyed, and the receipts of the players diminished enormously. Thereupon, the latter hied to court and laid the case before the throne. Fortunately for them, the monarch of the day, Charles VI., was precisely the man to enter heart and soul into such a controversy. The better to decide it he visited the spectacle, and was so well satisfied that in November, 1402, he issued letters patent granting the players full liberty to ply their craft in Paris, and even to appear in the streets in full theatric costume. The latter was a very necessary permission—indispensable, indeed, before the introduction of bill-posters. And for many a year after the actors were accustomed to preface their performances by marching through the streets with a drum beating before them, pausing at convenient corners to announce the piece for the day and to eulogize its merits. Thus victorious, the players hastened to place themselves beyond prévôtal reach for the future, and *to secure a monopoly of the Paris theatre*, by forming themselves into a guild duly chartered. And taking their name from the piece to which they owed their prosperity, they dubbed themselves in true mediæval style—"The Confraternity of the Masters, Governors, and Brothers of the Passion and Resurrection of Our Lord." They had little difficulty in finding a suitable edifice. There were then numerous hospitals in Paris, most of which, being intended for persons of peculiar occupation or for exceptional crises, were generally three parts empty; and in one or other of these the new brotherhood played its Mysteries until, towards the close of the century, it obtained possession, on lease, of the large hall of the Hospital of the Trinity. This apartment was well adapted for the players' purpose, being 130 feet long by 40 feet broad. And here, for the next forty years, they played on Sundays and holidays to crowded houses—charging their primitive price, two sous for admission. Their doors opened at 1 P.M. and closed at 5; and so popular were their entertainments, that the clergy very considerately altered the hour of vespers, in order that their flocks—and, as the spiteful added, themselves—might thoroughly enjoy them.

In the hands of the brotherhood of the Passion, to whom the guilds speedily abandoned it, the Mystery was very much abridged and lost the greater portion of its picturesque character. But its materials were still derived exclusively from the Bible; and as the gravity of the subject was no longer relieved by splendid show, the brotherhood endeavoured to render its entertainment attractive in another way by the liberal introduction of farce. There resulted as odd a mixture as it is possible to conceive. Patriarchs were made to chant drinking-songs, apostles to relate the pranks of their carnal days, and venerated characters to jest like the subjects of the "Grand Coësre," or King of the Beggars. This

state of things, however, was of no long duration. Sound knowledge, and its constant attendant reformation, were by this time vigorously at work, handling all things and changing most; among the rest the exhibition of the brothers of the Passion.

That body quitted the Hospital of the Trinity in 1542 for the Hôtel Flanders. There it brought out the Mysteries of the Apocalypse, of the Apostles, and of the Old Testament. All these were unusually licentious; that of the Old Testament so much so, that its representation was forbidden by the Parliament. King Francis, however, was appealed to by the brotherhood, and overruled the obnoxious decision. Of course everybody became eager to see the naughty play, and the hostility of the Parliament went far towards making the fortune of the guild. Among the more exalted spectators was Anthony, King of Navarre, who happened at the time to be passing through Paris. And as the only day he could spare to the sight happened to be neither Sunday nor holiday, the authorities issued a proclamation about three ells in length, permitting the brotherhood to play out of season for that time only. But the opposition of the Parliament was not altogether fruitless. While registering the order of the King, it managed to add a few seasonable regulations,—one running that no profane, licentious, or ridiculous scenes should be interwoven with the Mystery; and another, that the old prices of admission and hours of exhibition should at once be restored. For it appears that since their removal to the Hôtel Flanders, the brothers had increased the one and lengthened the other. With respect to the first of these regulations, the brotherhood paid little attention to the Parliament. That tribunal, however, was completely successful with the second, for the excellent reason that it carried the mob with it.

The Hôtel Flanders was pulled down in 1547, and the brotherhood found a final resting-place in the Hôtel de Bourgogne. But, simultaneous with this last removal, it ceased to play sacred dramas. That year an edict was published,* running substantially as follows:—It is forbidden to the brotherhood to play the Mystery of the Passion or any other holy mystery under penalty of fine, at the discretion of the authorities. The brotherhood is, nevertheless, to play any profane mysteries whatever, provided they be honest and lawful and without offence to anybody. Further, the Parliament forbids for evermore in the town and suburbs of Paris the representation of all games and mysteries, except in the name and to the profit of the said fraternity.

With this edict closed the mediæval period of the Paris theatre.

Previous to this the Fraternity of the Passion was not without rivals who deserve some notice. These were the students, the members of the Court of the Châtelet—corresponding to our Old Bailey—and the subjects of the Empire of Galilee and of the Kingdom of Basoche. Some of these bodies require a little explanation. The numerous clerks employed by

* The Council of Trent, then sitting, had something to do with this edict.

the Government and the Parliament formed themselves into corporations at an early period. We find them regularly chartered and established by the close of the thirteenth century. Each body elected a president and other officers annually. The chief of the Government clerks bore the title of Emperor of Galilee, and the head of the scribes of Parliament that of King of Basoche. Each of these potentates had the power of deciding all differences that happened to arise between his subjects, and of punishing all crimes committed by them, even with death—or, as feudal language phrased it, possessed the right of high and low justice. The kingdom of Basoche was by far the more powerful of these mock realms. All the clerks of justice throughout France were members. It had the right of coining money, which, however, had no circulation beyond its own confines; enjoyed a considerable revenue, including a fixed proportion of all legal fines, and could bring a powerful force into the field on occasion. This was strikingly manifested during the reign of Henry II. A revolt taking place in Guienne the Basoche mustered its fighting men, 6,000 strong, sent them well equipped into the field, and maintained them there until the close of the campaign, during which this French edition of the "Devil's Own" did excellent service. The corporation of the Châtelet consisted of the town-sergeants, some 300 strong, of the clerks of the court, and of the lawyers who practised therein, and was of less moment. As to the students, we need not enlarge concerning them. All these bodies had their festal days—that of the Empire of Galilee being Twelfth Day; that of the Basoche, the first of May; and that of the Châtelet, the first Monday after Trinity. The University as a body arrogated Christmas and the Carnival; while the several colleges had their own peculiar fêtes in addition. All these holidays were marked by processions well provided with banners and music, and closing with a dramatic exhibition, which, in its turn, was not unfrequently supplemented by furious rioting.

The plays of the Civil service, as we may term the Galileans and Basocheans, were enacted in the great hall of the Palace of Justice. This Palace of Justice had been, up to the fourteenth century, the residence of the Kings. In the earlier days of the French monarchy the whole machinery of the government attended the sovereign whithersoever he went, and in Paris lodged under the same roof. But as time progressed, a kind of divorce—*à mensâ et thoro*—became necessary; so the King removed from the island which is known as the city proper, and abandoned the old palace to the officers of the Government. The great hall of this palace, devoted of old to royal reception and revelry, and destroyed by fire in 1618, was a room of vast extent, measuring about 240 English feet in length by about 90 in width. Its roof was of wood. In the construction of such roofs the joiners of the Middle Ages took great pride and exhibited much skill, running their rivals in construction, the freemasons, a close race for the prize of artistic ingenuity: and the roof of the Palace of Justice was one of their masterpieces. Around the hall stood the statues of the French monarchs, from Pharamond down-

wards, and at one extremity extended the celebrated marble table. Here, at ordinary times, sat the three tribunals of the Army, the Navy, and the Woods and Forests; and on it the clerks exhibited their dramas. The clerks were not only the actors in these dramas, but to a large extent their constructors. Leaving Scriptural subjects to the Brotherhood of the Passion, and romance to another body, of which we shall say a word or two presently, they confined themselves to current events, which they dealt with after—that is to say, a long way after—the manner of Aristophanes. And the Merry Men of the Châtelet did much the same on a scaffolding erected in front of their very ancient tower. As to the students, they were an unruly body in all respects, and not least so in this; so they played just whatever they liked, wherever they liked, and however they liked, but always with so much of Aristophanes in their productions as to render them probably the most obnoxious of all to the authorities. This is saying a great deal; for in their theatrical character, Basocheans, Galilcans, and Merry Men of the Châtelet were all eminently disagreeable to gentlemen, and ladies, too, in high position. Accordingly, we find that austere body, the Parliament, for ever interfering with their amusements, sometimes placing restrictions on them, sometimes forbidding them altogether, and always with equal non-effect. The last fact greatly astonishes certain grave historians, but we cannot quite see why. The Parliament, quarrelling with the clerks and town-sergeants, was a veritable house divided against itself. It might, indeed, issue its edicts, but as these edicts were, in this instance, directed against its own officers, the men usually employed in effecting arrest and inflicting punishment—for the executioner himself figured among the actors at the Châtelet—we cannot exactly understand how these edicts were to be executed. We are quite aware that there were numerous other independent authorities in Paris—eighteen or twenty of them, we believe—each exercising the right of high and low justice, and each maintaining its little army of officials. But the Parliament, to say nothing of the degradation, was not likely to establish an ugly precedent against itself and its superiority by begging assistance from any other power. Its quarrels, therefore, with the clerks were generally very bald as to result.

Among other peculiarities in the character of Louis XI. was a fondness for low fun. The "hundred merry tales" drawn up for his amusement, and which we believe to be the book referred to by Beatrice as the origin of Benedick's good wit, throws as much light on the qualities of this much abused man as graver writings. He was particularly partial to the theatre of the clerks, and so long as they spared himself and his measures he cared little how far their ridicule extended. So during his time—which, as it happened, was rather a long one—the amateurs enjoyed a very fair toleration. Nor did they neglect to use it, tickling the risibility of the mob to any extent, and sowing for themselves and their theatricals no end of animosity, which fructified in due season. The moment the presence of Louis ceased to enliven his good town of Paris

(we say this advisedly, for Louis, like Henry VIII., was a decided popular favourite) the Parliament and other people in authority speedily developed a strong opposition to the fun of their inferiors. On May 16, 1476, an edict appeared forbidding clerks and others to enact farces, follies, or moralities publicly at the palace, the Châtelet, or elsewhere, on pain of exile and confiscation of goods. We do not know what happened at the ensuing Christmas. We presume, however, that things went on as usual, and that considering the season, the authorities winked at the theatricals. On the succeeding 1st of May the Basocheans enacted their farce as if there existed no prohibition to the contrary. And the Parliament, with much apparent lenity, contented itself with renewing its edict and with threatening the "high and powerful sovereign of the Kingdom of Basoche," Jean l'Eveille—John the Wide-Awake—with a whipping in case of any fresh infraction of the law by his subjects. John the Wide-Awake, however, fully merited his name, for the law was broken remorselessly, and with perfect impunity to the end of his reign, and the same thing happened under the rule of his successors for just ten years more. On May 1, 1486, the Morality, as our fathers called it, or the Immorality as we may term it, took unusual liberties with the great, not sparing even the King, Charles VIII. This was not to be borne; so eight days after out came a royal warrant, and at its heels a body of men-at-arms, who laid hands on four of the most prominent actors and thrust them into the dungeons of the Châtelet, from whence they were speedily transferred to a building quite as strong, the Conciergerie. Here they had to pay five sous each as entrance-money, with a rent of two deniers a week for sleeping-room on the floor, and four deniers a night in addition if they desired a bed! The last was a heavy sum in the good old times, and as the amateur actors were men of no high condition, it is probable that they paid no more than they were compelled to pay, and contented themselves with the ordinary prison-fare, that is to say straw—*when they could get it*. This was not always; otherwise the following entry would not recur so frequently in the criminal registers of the Parliament: "We enjoin you (gaolers) to treat your prisoners with mildness and humanity, and to give them their due allowance of straw, water, and ecclesiastical consolation." Nor was the straw, when they got it, of the most agreeable description. We find that when the litter used instead of carpets in the royal palace was unfit for further use there, it was handed over to the hospitals; and these were not days when undue sympathy was wasted on the prisoner, or better treatment accorded to him than to the unfortunate. We are not informed in which of the dungeons the amateurs were confined; whether in "the pretty girl," "the shrew," "the Jordan," or "the glory;" but whichever it was, we may presume that they were very uncomfortably and even dangerously lodged. The gaol-fever was a constant resident at the Conciergerie. Nor could it well be otherwise, seeing that through the whole course of the good old times there is but one instance recorded of its dungeons having undergone a thorough scrubbing. This took place

in 1548 by solemn command of Parliament; and then only because the miserable place had become absolutely poisonous. The clerks, however, did not abide very long in durance. As clerks they enjoyed all the privileges of the clergy, and that zealous body at once went to work for their release with the energy peculiar to itself, and with such effect that the offenders were released before the end of the month. Louis XII. was even more favourable to the clerks and their pet amusement than Louis XI. His reign, indeed, was the golden age of amateur theatricals. Nor could he be induced to interfere with the exhibitions of the marble table, even though he was himself subjected to its ridicule under the character of Father Avarice. But in return for this licence, the theatre, as we shall see, did Louis some service. Hardly, however, had the "father of his people" breathed his last when the Parliament resumed its squabbles with the players, and this time with some effect. True, Francis I. was on the throne, and he was a jovial monarch who loved a good jest even at his own expense. But through the whole of his long and stirring reign Francis was hardly ever his own master. The real rulers were people whose character and conduct rendered them peculiarly amenable to satire; and therefore that dangerous kind of satire which struts before the world in sock and buskin was soon tightly muzzled. Restraint after restraint was applied to the amateur farces, until, in 1540, it was ordained that no piece should be played thereafter until it had been rehearsed before and received the approval of a select committee of the Parliament. And to make this censorship the more rigid, it was further ordained that even after rehearsal and approval the clerks should be compelled to make a formal request for permission to exhibit their farce. These regulations being strictly enforced did much towards extinguishing the theatric fervour of Basochean and Galilean. And the ensuing religious wars completed the work; for the moralities of the Palace of Justice were discontinued early in the strife and never afterwards resumed.

Up to 1547 the Confraternity of the Passion confined itself to heavy business. Still it was fully aware of the value of lighter pieces, and always made ample use of them. Much about the same time with itself (1400) appeared for the first time a body of itinerant players, which, eschewing morality and mystery, devoted its energies to the glorification of Farce. These gentry, who called themselves *Enfans Sans Souci*, or "Careless Lads," soon became very famous. As the brothers of the Passion had the monopoly of the Paris theatre, the "Careless Lads" could not play in the metropolis without their permission. This produced some bickering, and in no long time an arrangement between the rivals. The older company agreed not merely to license the exhibition of the new comers, but to grant them the use of their own hall on certain conditions. One of these applied to a division of profits, another stipulated that the comedians should spend a certain portion of the year in Paris; and a third, that on their return from the provinces they should enter the city "in triumph,"—that is to say, in full theatric costume, with drums beating

and colours flying. Nor was this all. To fit it for fraternization with that august body—"the masters, governors, and brothers of the Passion of our Lord," the band of "Careless Lads" had to undergo a thorough reorganization. From that time forth it took the titles of the "Seigneurie de l'Engoulevent," and "Principauté de la Sottise," and was ruled by a lord and prince, who had his chancellor, guidon, herald, and robes of state,—all of properly ridiculous patterns,—the head-dress, for example, consisting in a fool's cap decorated with a monstrous pair of asses' ears. This body was duly recognized and chartered by the authorities, and, like most of the other burlesque kingdoms, enjoyed some very substantial privileges, the person of its prince being as secure from arrest for debt as the person of any other great lord in the realm. And these titles, dignities and privileges, he was to retain so long as he continued to make the aforesaid triumphal entry into the city. What this ceremony was may be conceived when we state that, on one occasion, it included "thirty great devils suitably caparisoned, who gambolled diabolically and threw fireworks liberally among the spectators." We need not say that this triumph eventually became notorious for low ruffianism, so offensive, in fact, that it had to be discontinued. And this led to decidedly the most singular lawsuit on record. But the affair lies within another theatrical period, and cannot now be noticed.

Personally, the Prince of Fools was not quite the man his office would lead us to believe. In nearly every instance he was fully as clever as he was comic; very fairly read, considering the era; and, stranger still, of some literary ability. Indeed, the writings of these potentates make a very respectable figure in old French literature. The most remarkable of them—that is, during the period we treat of—was Pierre Gringoire, Gringore, or Gringon, for his name is spelt almost as variously as that of Shakspeare. The younger son of a good Norman family, he entered the University of Paris, with the view of devoting himself to one of the learned professions. But long before he was qualified to take a degree he made a love-match, and was thenceforth compelled to live by his wits. Rather a difficult matter he found it for several years. He tried a good many things in turn, and failed at all, sometimes for lack of capital, but more frequently for lack of impudence. At length, somewhere about 1502, he cast in his lot with the Careless Lads, and soon rose to eminence among them. Here he produced farce after farce with remarkable success, and eventually realized a competence, with which he retired to the comparative privacy of a political essayist. His principal production as Prince of Fools was written by order of the King, and exhibited in 1511. It was the most remarkable of the political dramas occasionally enacted by the Careless Lads, and, as usual in such cases, was played at the Fish Market.* From beginning to end it was a bitter satire on the clergy, and

* This piece is well deserving of study. A good analysis of it will be found in the *Cours d'Eloquence Française de M. Gérusez*, tome ii. p. 123.

never were clerical vices handled more ruthlessly. Indeed, the forthcoming Reformation, prolific as it proved in savage writings, produced nothing more ferociously virulent than this. It had little fable and less art. The characters satirized were merely brought upon the stage to recount all the evil that they had already done, and all the further evil that they meant to do, and that was all. Nevertheless, it was a great success, and did much to reconcile the people with anti-papal wars.

As to the non-political pieces produced by the Careless Lads, they consisted of farces and profane mysteries, which included tragedy and comedy. The farces consisted each of a few ludicrous situations borrowed from one of the popular stories. The comedies were much longer, and not at all more refined or original. Most of them, like Jodelle's *Eugène*, closed after the manner unfortunately not peculiar to Mrs. Behn. And with the addition of plenty of horror, and perhaps the subtraction of some of the grossness, the same description will apply to the tragedies. The Latin poets and the Italian novelists furnished the materials of both; the plots of three or four plays or of five or six stories being generally interwoven to compose a single drama. The mediæval playwright, indeed, did his best to atone for want of wit by multiplicity of incident; but not very successfully, in the view of competent judges. Amyot, in his version of *Plutarch*, alludes more than once to the "*vileinement fait acte de bastelear ou de farceur sur un eschaffaut en plein theatre.*" And Montaigne shortly reviews and strongly condemns the composite fable and tedious dialogue of the Sephonisbes, Cleopatres, Didons, and Soltanes of Jodelle, St. Gelais, Bounyn, and Péruse. Montaigne, however, allows (*Essays*, ii. 10) that the acting was much superior, and that it frequently reconciled even his cultivated taste to the deformities and absurdities of the drama.

The mediæval theatre had its spiteful censors as well as its bad playwrights and good actors. One of these gentry—the Collier of his day—speaks of "that cloaque and house of Sathan the Hotel of Burgundy, whose actors, with shocking abuse of terms, designate themselves the Brothers of the Passion of Jesus Christ! That place," continued he, "is the scene of a thousand scandalous assignations. It is the bane of virtue, the destroyer of modesty, and the ruin of poor families. Long before the play begins it is thronged with artisans, who pass their time in gross badinage, card and dice playing, gormandizing and drinking, from which things result many quarrels and batteries. And what do they witness on the stage? A travestie of sacred rites, mock priests, laughable marriages, the cross and altar prophaned, and the words of the Gospel parodied and turned into ridicule; or, at the very least, a farce which is disorderly, indecent, and vile."

Monte Generoso.

The long hot days of Italian summer were settling down on plain and country when, in the last week of May, we travelled northward from Florence and Bologna seeking coolness. That was very hard to find in Lombardy. The days were long and sultry, the nights short, without a respite from the heat. Milan seemed a furnace, though in the great Duomo and the narrow shady streets there was a twilight darkness which at least looked cool. Long may it be before the northern spirit of improvement has taught the Italians to despise the wisdom of their fore-fathers, who built those sombre streets of palaces with overhanging eaves, that, almost meeting, form a shelter from the fiercest sun. The Lake country was even worse than the towns; the sunlight lay all day asleep upon the shining waters, and no breeze came to stir their surface or to lift the tepid veil of haze, through which the stony mountains, with their yet unmelted patches of winter snow, glared as if in mockery of coolness.

Then we heard of a new inn, which had just been built by an enterprising Italian doctor below the very top of Monte Generoso. There was a picture of it in our hotel at Cadenabbia, but this gave but little idea of any particular beauty: a big square house, with many windows, and the usual ladies on mules, and guides with alpenstocks, advancing towards it, and some round bushes growing near, was all it showed. Yet there hung the real Monte Generoso above our heads, and we thought it must be cooler on its height than by the lake shore. To find coolness was the great point with us just then. Moreover, some one talked of the wonderful plants that grew among its rocks, and of its grassy slopes enamelled with such flowers as make our cottage gardens at home gay in summer, not to speak of others rarer and peculiar to the region of the Southern Alps. Indeed, the Generoso has a name for flowers, and it deserves it, as we presently found.

This mountain is fitted by its position for commanding one of the finest views in the whole range of the Lombard Alps. A glance at the map shows that. Standing out pre-eminent among the chain of lower hills to which it belongs, the Lakes of Lugano and Como with their long arms enclose it on three sides, while on the fourth the plain of Lombardy with its many cities, its rich pasture-lands and cornfields intersected by winding river-courses and straight interminable roads, advances to its very foot. No place could be better chosen for surveying that contrasted scene of plain and mountain, which forms the great attraction to the outlying buttresses of the Central Alpine mass. The superiority of the Monte Generoso to any of the similar eminences on the Northern outskirts

of Switzerland is great. In richness of colour, in picturesqueness of suggestion, in sublimity and breadth of prospect, its advantages are incontestable. The reasons for this superiority are obvious. On the Italian side the transition from mountain to plain is far more abrupt: the atmosphere being clearer, a larger sweep of distance is within our vision; again, the sunlight blazes all day long upon the very front and forehead of the distant Alpine chain, instead of rising and sinking behind it, as it does upon the northern side.

From Mendrisio, the village at the foot of the mountain, an easy mule-path leads to the hotel, winding first through English looking hollow lanes with real hedges, which are rare in this country, and English primroses beneath them. Then comes a forest region of luxuriant chestnut trees, giants with pink boles just bursting into late leafage, yellow and tender, but too thin as yet for shade. A little higher up the chestnuts are displaced by wild laburnums bending under their weight of flowers. The graceful branches meet above our heads, sweeping their long tassels against our faces as we ride beneath them, while the air for a good mile is full of fragrance. It is strange to be reminded in this blooming labyrinth of the dusty suburb roads and villa gardens of London. The laburnum is pleasant enough in St. John's Wood or the Regent's Park in May—a tame domesticated thing of brightness amid smoke and dust. But it is another thing to see it flourishing in its own home, clothing acres of the mountain-side in a very splendour of spring-colour, mingling its paler blossoms with the golden broom of our own hills, and with the silver of the hawthorn and wild cherry. Deep beds of lilies-of-the-valley grow everywhere beneath the trees; and in the meadows purple columbines, white asphodels, the Alpine spiræa, tall, with feathery leaves, blue scabius, golden hawkweeds, turkscap lilies, and, above all, the exquisite narcissus poeticus with its crimson-tipped cup, are crowded in a maze of dazzling brightness. Higher up the laburnums disappear, and flaunting crimson planes gleam here and there upon the rocks, until at length the gentians and white ranunculuses of the higher Alps displace the less hardy flowers of Italy.

About an hour below the summit of the mountain we came upon the inn, a large clean barrack, with scanty furniture and snowy wooden floors, guiltless of carpets. It is big enough to hold about a hundred guests; and Doctor Pasta, who built it, a native of Mendrisio, was gifted either with much faith or with a real prophetic instinct. Anyhow he deserves commendation for his spirit of enterprise. As yet the house is little known to English travellers: it is mostly frequented by Italians from Milan, Novara, and other cities of the plain, who call it the Italian Righi, and come to it, as cockneys go to Richmond, for noisy picnic excursions, or at most for a few weeks *villegiatura* in the summer heats. When we were there in May the season had scarcely begun, and the only inmates besides ourselves were a large party from Milan, ladies and gentlemen in holiday guise, who came, stayed one night, climbed the peak at sunrise,

and departed amid jokes and shouting and half childish play, very unlike the doings of a similar party in sober England. After that the stillness of death descended on the mountain, and the sun shone day after day upon that great view which seemed created only for ourselves. And what a view it was! The plain stretching up to the high horizon, where a misty range of pink cirrus clouds alone marked the line where earth ended and the sky began, was islanded with cities and villages innumerable, basking in the hazy shimmering heat. Milan, seen through the Doctor's telescope, displayed its Duomo perfect as a microscopic shell, with all its exquisite fretwork, and Napoleon's arch of triumph surmounted by the four tiny horses, as in a fairy's dream. Far off long silver lines marked the lazy course of Po and Ticino, while little lakes like Varese and the lower end of Maggiore spread themselves out, connecting the mountains with the plain.

Five minutes' walk from the hotel brought us to a ridge where the precipice fell suddenly and almost sheer over one arm of Lugano lake. Sullenly outstretched asleep it lay beneath us, coloured with the tints of fluor spar, or with the changeful green and azure of a peacock's breast. The depth appeared immeasurable. San Salvadore had receded into insignificance: the houses and churches and villas of Lugano bordered the lake shore with an uneven line of whiteness. And over all there rested a blue mist of twilight and of haze, contrasting with the clearness of the peaks above. It was sunset when we first came here; and, wave beyond wave, the purple Italian hills tossed their crested summits to the foot of a range of stormy clouds that shrouded the high Alps. Behind the clouds was sunset, clear and golden; but the mountains had put on their mantle for the night, and the hem of their garment was all we were to see. And yet—over the edge of the topmost ridge of cloud, what was that long hard line of black, too solid and immovable for cloud, rising into four sharp needles clear and well defined? Surely it must be the familiar outline of Monte Rosa itself, the form which every one who loves the Alps knows well by heart, which picture-lovers know from Ruskin's woodcut in the *Modern Painters*. For a moment only the vision stayed: then clouds swept over it again, and from the place where the empress of the Alps had been, a pillar of mist shaped like an angel's wing, purple and tipped with gold, shot up against the pale green sky. That cloud-world was a pageant in itself, as grand and more gorgeous perhaps than the mountains would have been. Deep down through the hollows of the Simplon a thunderstorm was driving; and we saw forked flashes once and again, as in a distant world, lighting up the valleys for a moment, and leaving the darkness blacker behind them as the storm blurred out the landscape forty miles away. Darkness was coming to us too; though our sky was clear and the stars were shining brightly. At our feet the earth was folding itself to sleep; the plain was wholly lost; little islands of white mist had formed themselves, and settled down upon the lakes and on their marshy estuaries; the birds were hushed; the gentian cups were

filling to the brim with dew. Night had descended on the mountain and the plain; and the show was over.

The dawn was showing pink in the east next morning, when we again scrambled through the beech scrub to the point above the lake. Like an ink-blot it lay, unruffled, slumbering sadly. Broad sheets of vapour brooded on the plain, telling of miasma and fever, of which we on the mountain, in the pure cool air, knew nothing. The Alps were all there now—cold, unreal, stretching like a phantom line of snowy peaks, from the sharp pyramids of Monte Viso and the Grisola in the west to the distant Bernina and the Ortler in the east. Supreme among them towered Monte Rosa—queenly, triumphant, gazing down in proud pre-eminence as she does when seen from any point of the Italian plain. There is no mountain like her. Mont Blanc himself is not so regal; and she seems to know it, for even the clouds sweep humbled round her base, girdling her at most, but leaving her crown clear and free. Now, however, there were no clouds to be seen in all the sky. The mountains had a strange, unshriven look, as if waiting to be blessed. Above them, in the cold grey air, hung a low black arch of shadow, the shadow of the bulk of the huge earth, which still concealed the sun. Slowly, slowly this dark line sunk lower, till, one by one, at last, the peaks caught first a pale pink flush; then a sudden golden glory flashed from one to the other, as they leapt joyfully into life. It is a supreme moment, this first burst of life and light over the sleeping world, as one can only see it on rare days and in rare places like the Monte Generoso. The earth—enough of it at least for us to picture to ourselves the whole—lies at our feet; and we feel as the Saviour might have felt, when from the top of that high mountain he beheld the kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them. Strangely and solemnly may we image to our fancy the lives that are being lived down in those cities of the plain: how many are waking at this very moment to toil and a painful weariness, to sorrow, or to "that unrest which men miscall delight;" while we upon our mountain buttress, suspended in mid-heaven and for a while removed from daily cares, are drinking in the beauty of the world that God has made so fair and wonderful. From this same eyrie, only a few years ago, the hostile armies of France, Italy, and Austria might have been watched moving in dim masses across the plains, for the possession of which they were to clash in mortal fight at Solferino and Magenta. All is peaceful now. It is hard to picture the waving cornfields trodden down, the burning villages and ransacked vineyards, all the horrors of real war to which that fertile plain has been so often the prey. But now these memories of

> Old, unhappy, far-off things,
> And battles long ago,

do but add a calm and beauty to the radiant scene that lies before us. And the thoughts which it suggests, the images with which it stores our mind, are not without their noblest uses. The glory of the world sinks

deeper into our shallow souls than we well know; and the spirit of its splendour is always ready to revisit us on dark and weary days at home with an unspeakable refreshment. Even as I write I seem to see the golden glow sweeping in broad waves over the purple hills nearer and nearer, till the lake brightens at our feet, and the windows of Lugano flash with sunlight, and little boats creep forth across the water like spiders on a pond, leaving an arrowy track of light upon the green behind them, while Monte Salvador with its tiny chapel and a patch of the further landscape are still kept in darkness by the shadow of the Generoso itself. The birds wake into song as the sun's light comes; cuckoo answers cuckoo from ridge to ridge; dogs bark; and even the sounds of human life rise up to us: children's voices and the murmurs of the market-place ascending faintly from the many villages hidden among the chestnut-trees beneath our feet; while the creaking of a cart we can but just see slowly crawling along the straight road by the lake is heard at intervals.

The full beauty of the sunrise is but brief. Already the low lake-like mists we saw last night have risen and spread, and shaken themselves out into masses of summer clouds, which, floating upward, threaten to envelop us upon our vantage-ground. Meanwhile they form a changeful sea below, blotting out the plain, surging up into the valleys with the movement of a billowy tide, attacking the lower heights like the advance-guard of a besieging army, but daring not as yet to invade the cold and solemn solitudes of the snowy Alps. These, too, in time, when the sun's heat has grown strongest, will be folded in their midday pall of sheltering vapour.

The very summit of Monte Generoso must not be left without a word of notice. The path to it is as easy as the sheep-walks on an English down, though cut along grass-slopes where a roll would end in death. At the top the view is much the same, as far as the grand features go, as that which is commanded from the cliff by the hotel. But the rocks here are crowded with rare Alpine flowers—delicate golden auriculas with powdery leaves and stems, pale yellow cowslips, soldanellas at the edge of lingering patches of the winter snow, blue gentians, and the frail, rosy-tipped ranunculus, called glacialis. Their blooming time is brief. When summer comes the mountain will be bare and burned like all Italian hills. The Generoso is a very dry mountain, silent and solemn from its want of streams. There is no sound of falling waters on its crags; no musical rivulets flow down its sides, led carefully along the slopes, as in Switzerland, by the peasants, to keep their hay-crops green and gladden the thirsty turf throughout the heat and drought of summer. The soil is a Jurassic limestone: the rain penetrates the porous rock, and sinks through cracks and fissures, to reappear above the base of the mountain in a full-grown stream. This is a defect in the Generoso, as much to be regretted as the want of shade upon its higher pastures. Here, as elsewhere in Piedmont, the forests are cut exclusively for charcoal, the beech-

scrub, which covers large tracts of the hills, never having the chance of growing into trees much higher than a man. It is this which makes an Italian mountain at a distance look woolly, like a sheep's back. Among the scrub, however, lilies-of-the-valley and Solomon's seals delight to grow; and the league-long beds of wild strawberries prove that when the laburnums have faded, the mountain will become a garden of feasting.

At mid-day, when the mountains are wrapped in cloud, the plain becomes distinct again, backed to the southward by a range of hills not seen till now, which, sweeping round the valley of the Po from near Turin, joins the Maritime Alps above Genoa, and ends at last in a distant filmy line—the Apennines beyond Parma. What a sweep of plain it is! How strangely chequered with cloud-shadows, forests, cities, and the spreading pasture-lands of Lombardy! To look at it alone is enough for a long summer's day. Meanwhile, we have some books—*Ariosto*, and *Guarini*, and *Tassoni* whom we have learned to like in Modena and Ferrara—and behold! an obliging waiter comes to entertain the English folks with their native literature, three volumes of the *Family Herald* bought by him at Dover while in service at the big "Lord Warden." Doctor Pasta, too, brings us his telescope, and tells us how he came to think of building his hotel upon the mountain, and adding many curious tales of his experiences when practising among the peasants of Mendrisio. It seems that he had frequently to cure them of snake-bites and of poisonings from toadstools that grow among the chestnut woods. Wandering through this beautiful lake country we feel an odd sense of insecurity when told that no prudent peasant goes forth to labour in his vineyard without taking a bottle of ammonia in his pocket as a remedy against probable bites of adders. As to the funguses, the poisonous and harmless kinds are sufficiently well known; but so careless are the villagers that they entrust the gathering of them sometimes to children. Thus they are dried and eaten without proper supervision.

After this fashion the days on Monte Generoso go lazily by, and sadly at last we bid farewell to the mountain and its glorious views. Descending once more into the plain, we find ourselves towards evening on the terrace of the Bellevue Hotel at Cadenabbia, where flashily-dressed American ladies and supercilious English people of apparent fashion are lounging, gossiping, flirting, passing their time as best they can beneath the burden of intolerable heat, as if we had never been away. Beautiful as the scenery may be, this languid life of the Italian lakes is not really good. It breeds an indolence which takes away even the capacity of enjoyment, whereas upon the mountain there was always enough of Alpine feeling in the air to temper the Italian summer. There the vigorous life of the Swiss mountains seems at hand, while here the same hills like a stifling garden-wall shut us in and stupefy us by their very beauty.

LUCY FOUND HERSELF BROUGHT FACE TO FACE WITH A PROPOSAL

Against Time.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Apples of Discord.

SOME days later, and a chorus from the "Kennels," a grinding of wheels on the gravel, followed by a peal at the bell, disturbed four gentlemen dallying over a late luncheon at Killoden—George and Hugh Childersleigh, Lord Rushbrook, and McAlpine. The rain was descending in torrents; the party were close prisoners, and the resources of the day had to be economized.

"Who the deuce have we here?" said Hugh, drawing back his chair; "visitors, and on a day like this?"

"It looks like it," yawned Rushbrook; "that bell rings the death-knell of your afternoon rubber, McAlpine."

"No doubt whatever about an arrival. I can hear them peeling now in the hall. Well, here goes to do the hospitable," said George, rising deliberately and moving very leisurely towards the door. At that moment it was flung open, and disclosed his brother standing on the threshold.

"What, you here, Purkiss? this is an unexpected pleasure."

"I don't see why it should be then," retorted Purkiss, shortly, by no means over-charmed at the sight of the party in possession, none of whom he greatly cared for. He embraced them in a somewhat cavalier bow, returned with about equal cordiality, as he observed to George, "My father must have got my letter yesterday morning."

"I daresay he did; but, as it happens, he is away from home. Did not the servants tell you?"

"No, confound them; at least they muttered something I didn't listen to. Where is Sir Basil gone?"

"Gone to spend a week with Huskisson at Ardmore."

"He hasn't taken the girls with him?"

"To be sure he has; they'll be equally surprised and gratified to learn you regretted it."

"Pshaw! Oh, by the way," rejoined Purkiss, seemingly rather inconsequently, "I've got Hemprigge here with me. I had quite forgotten him; but he came to see you, Hugh, on important business. Really I beg your pardon, Hemprigge," he went on, turning towards the passage; "the truth is, I was annoyed, for your sake, at finding we had missed my father."

Hemprigge entered, rather black from his unceremonious reception and the cold news that had reached his ears. With all his well-tried composure he started, and was visibly put out when he found himself face to face with the occupants of the room. It was bad enough to deal with Hugh embarrassed by an uneasy conscience, but to have the sarcastic Rushbrook, the shrewd McAlpine for witnesses of the awkward meeting, was a veritable trick of the Evil One. George Childersleigh, however, came forward with much courtesy to do the honours, and atone for his tardy welcome by an extra display of cordial hospitality. Hemprigge clung to his proffered hand like a drowning man, exhausting himself in elaborate acknowledgments of his civil commonplaces. He felt Hugh was looking on in an impatience none the less intense that he contrived to smother its outward signs; that he was watching terrier-like to spring upon him for explanations. But, at all hazards, Hemprigge must collect his thoughts, and he found his thoughts strangely slow to gather themselves at his call.

At last Hugh lost all patience and interfered: seized him by the arm and dragged him off to the window, with an "Excuse me if I claim precedence of the luncheon and other people for a moment's *tête-à-tête*, but we are all friends here, and all more or less interested in the Crédit Foncier." The truth was, he fancied nothing short of imminent disaster could have brought Hemprigge there, and that gentleman's evident reluctance to break the news confirmed him in the idea. "Well, Hemprigge," he whispered, "what has gone wrong—out with it, man—let me know the worst?"

At that moment, fond of money as Mr. Hemprigge was, he felt he would have given a trifle to be back in Lothbury.

"Oh, nothing wrong; nothing whatever, Mr. Childersleigh," he stammered.

"If so, why should you be here? Come, come, Hemprigge, don't play the child. You know me well enough to be certain I can bear the worst you have to tell."

"But upon my life, Mr. Childersleigh," repeated Hemprigge, more awkwardly embarrassed than before—it was strange the ascendancy the one man had established in the other, since those earlier days when Hemprigge rather figured as patron—"Upon my life, and I pledge you my solemn word on it, there is no misfortune whatever. It was only that

Bulgarian Irrigation scheme: I felt I ought to talk it over with you in person, and the prudence of making any further advances in the meantime to the harbour works at——"

"And this is really the case, sir? This is absolutely all?"

"As I have had the honour of assuring you, sir," returned Hemprigge, with a strong effort at rallying himself, and stopping his being ridden over rough-shod in this authoritative fashion; but he sunk his eyes before Childersleigh's cold, steady stare.

"When I left my post," resumed Childersleigh—"and it was very much at your persuasion—it was on the distinct assurance you should attend personally to all business in my absence. Therefore nothing short of a matter of life and death should have brought you here."

"The circumstances——"

Childersleigh turned abruptly on his heel. "Now, George, I shall hand Mr. Hemprigge over to your hospitality. I see you look anxious, McAlpine, and well you may; but set your mind at rest. Everything is going prosperously, and it was nothing but a most sensitive excess of care for our interests that sent Mr. Hemprigge on his journey to the north."

One by one, the four other gentlemen sauntered out of the room, leaving the new arrivals to their meal.

"I'm really sorry, Hemprigge, I should have brought you so far on a wild-goose chase," began Purkiss, who, to do him justice, was greatly vexed for more reasons than one. "None the less so, that it seems to have excited some unpleasantness between you and that most overbearing chief of yours."

"Never mind that, Childersleigh. Perhaps he may find he has the greater reason for regret in the long run."

"I pray it may be so; but then to miss the ladies after all your trouble."

"Of a piece with my luck through all that business," returned Hemprigge gloomily. "However, one thing is gained; the party here appears to be broken up, and when they come up to town——"

"Which they will in a very few weeks at latest. You shall come to 'The Cedars' as often as you please, and manage matters as you please. So cheer up and help yourself to sherry."

"Well, what brought him here, Childersleigh, if it's a fair question?" McAlpine broke out, when Hugh joined him in another room.

"A perfectly fair question, but one I can't answer. All I can tell you is, it was not the Bulgarian Irrigation loan, as he says."

"Possibly he has some of the weaknesses as well as the vices of our common nature," suggested Rushbrook; "and simply wanted a holiday. There, I must confess, I should sympathize with him."

Hugh shook his head. "Hemprigge is as little given to holiday-making as any man I know; and this is the last time or place he'd have taken one. No, he had some pressing reason of his own for coming—and

now it becomes simple matter of business to find it out, as I infallibly shall before many weeks are over," he added, after a pause.

"When can you spare me an hour, Childersleigh?" began the subject of the conversation softly, when, a little later, Purkiss ushered him into the morning-room. He had recovered all his composure, with his usual manner of familiar deference.

Hugh looked at his watch. "As it chances, I have precisely the hour you ask at your disposal, Mr. Hemprigge. At four the carriage comes to the door, that takes me to Scalltown—unless, indeed, I can offer you a seat in it; or will the business keep till we meet in Lothbury?"

"You leave Killoden then?"

"Yes, for London. I sleep in Scalltown to-night; take leave of Sir Basil to-morrow morning—he is staying with a friend in the neighbourhood; and go on by the afternoon train."

All the composure Hemprigge had mustered was gone again. The undisguised contempt with which Hugh disposed of his pretence of important business, the jealousy excited by his expressed intention of taking leave of the ladies—who would go a yard out of his way to say good-by to Sir Basil?—not only made him lose his temper, but eager to show he had lost it. Mr. Hemprigge, in short, was fairly upset with his plans, and so in a measure was Hugh Childersleigh; and for once the two men mutually forgot themselves, and showed each other their hands. Hemprigge replied shortly—

"You must be judge in the last resort, Mr. Childersleigh, of what is for the interests of the Company. You treat as matter of no consequence the business that seemed to me worth a most inconvenient journey. Very well; the responsibility rests with you, and I leave it there and have nothing more to say—here at least. For your kind offer of a seat, as you have done so much to lighten my mind, I shall decline it. I stay here to-night as Mr. Purkiss's guest, and to-morrow go southward by the other coast. They tell me the scenery is magnificent."

"Just as you please," returned Hugh negligently, and his eyes met those of his subordinate, now openly insubordinate for the first time; yet he scarcely regretted the event that had changed faint suspicion into something approaching certainty. At that moment he decided Hemprigge was dangerous—if he were so, it was far better he had sprung his rattles.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Ottoman Loan.

As might have been anticipated, no one who had assisted at the first meeting of the Chairman and Managing Director on their return to town, could have guessed the terms on which they parted. Each knew the other too well to be apprehensive of any awkwardness, and they met

accordingly on a perfectly unembarrassed footing. Their relations were altered, of course, and now Childersleigh could congratulate himself on the absence of the friendly familiarity he had broken himself to tolerate. With the exception of one or two commonplace remarks interchanged when they were alone, as simple matter of precaution against their finding themselves together in company, their conversation limited itself strictly to business; but it was conducted with much civility, and an apparent absence of all distrust and reserve. Hemprigge was far too clever to continue cordial; even had it been more imprudent, perhaps he would have indulged himself in the luxury of being distant with the man he had cause to hate. But, in truth, he had made up his mind that coolness was his wisest tactics. He might easily convince Childersleigh his individual interests guaranteed his fidelity to those of the business; he could never hope to persuade him again of his personal devotion.

Those meetings of the Court now-a-days gave Childersleigh some uneasiness, caused him sometimes to think remorsefully of the pleasant Capua, where he had whiled away a full month of his precious time. He tried to set it down to his own over-susceptibility, yet a succession of little incidents told him his influence was imperilled, if not shaken; that he was something less than the autocrat he had been. Men who used to hear his opinions only to assent, now, while he was speaking, cast involuntary glances at Hemprigge. That gentleman may have looked more than he said, but somehow discussions arose oftener than of old, and were more prolonged. When he was prevailed upon to express his views, although he generally ended by subscribing to the proposals of the Governor, yet it was only after a most flattering review and forcible statement of the opinions of those who had opposed them. Right or wrong, Childersleigh came to the conclusion his old ally was secretly working against him; and he began to apprehend that these new-born feelings might even blind Hemprigge to his own good and the Company's. Moreover, in his self-confidence, Childersleigh believed that the nearer he came to a dictatorship, the more likely he was to win his great match. What chance would his best speed have against the steady advance of Time towards the goal that both were nearing, if clever fellows like this accursed Hemprigge took to getting in his way, perhaps even tripping him up? Hemprigge's work was done, and he would gladly have cast him aside; but for that he acknowledged it was too soon or too late. "He came in with me, he is zealous, he has brought them all to believe in him, and with great reason; for, to give him his due, he's an exceedingly sharp fellow. To remove him then, as yet at least, is out of the question; I could scarcely ask even Rushbrook or McAlpine to second me in it. No, the only thing to be done is, to hand him back quietly to the second place, to show them all he has neither strength nor pretension to match himself with me; and, by-and-by, when I regain my strength, if I still think him worth the breaking—why, I'll do it."

If Childersleigh saw in the breach between him and Hemprigge a faint

speck against the bright blue sky, no one else could detect the shadow of a cloud. Never had the Company promised more brilliantly; although that, indeed, might have been said of it on each successive day since it flashed up meteor-like from its creator's brain. Its career had been one of unchecked advance, as registered by the voice of commercial opinion, and tested by those presumably infallible barometers—the share-lists. It had ridden buoyantly on the swelling flood of prosperity, that on its broad bosom was bearing thousands to wealth. For the first time in her history, England began to awake to some glimmering knowledge of the unsuspected depth of her resources. Credit inflated itself like a monster balloon, floating to giddy heights the elastic car that seemed to have places in it for every one. The soft breezes that wafted it sat steady as trade-winds in fair quarters, and up in those spheres the atmosphere was so exhilarating that none were found to doubt of the success of the voyage. Confidence was contagious, growing to temerity with all, to madness with some. The cool Childersleigh kept his head far better than most; but, breathing the air he did, it was impossible mortal man should altogether escape the prevailing epidemic. Nor was he quite so much of a free agent as he had been; and, to change the metaphor, three-fourths of his officers and all his crew were more or less intoxicated. Men had taken to accepting liabilities as lightly as invitations to dinner, and the country was pledging itself pleasantly and easily for sums that would have drained the strong boxes of the world. In spite of yourself, you were hurried along with the rest; if you made a bold effort to be singular, and tried steering by your native caution, you were altogether out of the race, and might as well drop your anchor where you were. Nearly all that man in his position could do, it must be confessed Childersleigh did. He carefully looked out for shoal water, with its ugly sunken reefs, and kept his eye upon the sky, ready to strike his sails at the first warnings of the storm. He never shared the common illusion, or believed in the arrival of a commercial millennium. He knew what others seemed to have forgotten—that these favouring gales could not possibly last for ever. The best he hoped for was to use them while he might, and guard against danger when they changed.

The Company's transactions were enormous, swelling and spreading every day. The schemes it gave birth to, or fostered, proved each of them a fresh mine to its lucky shareholders. The handsome promotion money was but a modest proportion of the gain each new connection brought. The dividends declared would have seemed fabulous to any of the generations that had speculated and ruined themselves since the bursting of the South Sea Bubble; yet the grasping shareholders grumbled at the sums the prudence of the Directors insisted on setting aside for the reserve. Nay, more: the Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey seemed likely not only to be a triumphant success financially, but to be really the great moral engine Dr. Silke Reynardson had fondly dreamed. The Reverend Doctor, by the way, had attempted to get up a

cabal to carry larger dividends and smaller reserves; but the influence of the Directors had outvoted him by an immense majority. However, that eloquent divine might console himself by seeing his philanthropic aspirations in a fair way of fulfilment. Sanguine politicians already spoke of the Company as a lever that might be advantageously employed for the permanent elevation of the Turkish Empire; for sapping and shaking the outworks Russia, with her Panslavonic propaganda, sought to push across the Danube. Already with its affiliated societies the Crédit Foncier was hard at work, draining and irrigating; changing swamps into cornfields, and deserts into market-gardens; running up new quarters in Constantinople, with flushed drains, and gas and water —Western luxuries—all laid on. It was deepening harbours and throwing out breakwaters in the Euxine; improving agriculture and extending commerce; snatching trader and peasant alike from the beaks and claws of the money-lending harpies who tore at the vitals of legitimate enterprise.—And all this done for "a consideration;" and indeed a very handsome one. Finally, the elder moneyed establishments connected with the East paid their young rival the compliment of being outrageously jealous of it—an apparently adverse circumstance of which Childersleigh resolved to take advantage, as he contrived somehow or other to do of most things.

The financial advisers of the Sultan had determined, for the twentieth time, "definitely to place the debt of the Empire on a satisfactory footing." This time it was a question of a new 20,000,000*l.* loan; the rumours of the arrangement echoed through all the *Bourses* of Europe, and naturally were made matter of special interest and curiosity with the Court of the Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey. It was the day of the weekly meeting: the doors of the Court-room had closed on that august body, and its members, withdrawn beyond the range of vulgar eyes and ears, were disposing of the varied business before them in a *sans-façon* manner that might have scandalized the uninitiated.

"Well, gentlemen, anything fresh about this loan?" began Schwartzchild.

"Why, yes; it's settled at last, Hemprigge assures me," replied McAlpine, taking the word—Childersleigh sat silent, busy apparently with his memorandum-book—"all settled. Tell them what you told me, Hemprigge; you can rely on your information, I suppose?"

"Unquestionably, I should say; and I think you would agree with me if I were at liberty to give you my informant's name—which, unluckily, I am not. It's for 20,000,000*l.*, as we understood; the Bosphorus Bank has got it, as we expected; the preliminaries and main points are all arranged; the details will follow as a matter of course."

"The terms?"

"A Six per Cent. Stock at 67."

"Security?"

"Crown lands in Thrace, Thessaly, and Epirus; Port-dues of Smyrna,

Beyrout, Tripoli, Alexandretta; salt-monopoly for Syria, &c.," ran off Hemprigge, glibly.

"I haven't the remotest conception what may be the worth of that guarantee, or the meaning of half its items; but, if it covers the loan satisfactorily, it seems to me it ought to be an excellent affair."

"Unquestionably—most undoubtedly."

"Then I suppose the sooner we sound the Bank about letting us have our share in it the better. Indeed, I wonder the advances have not come from them. Eh, Mr. Governor, what do you say?"

"That it's a very gratifying sign of the times, and a proof the more of our prosperity. The Bosphorus is jealous of us, that's all."

"They can't well refuse to let us join them."

"They will refuse, however, I suspect. As you very justly remarked, if they had wished for our co-operation, the tender would have come from them, and come already. But, in my opinion, the Bank will never arrange this loan at all."

"What do you say, Hemprigge?" said Schwartzchild, turning to that gentleman. "You seem to know more about this business than any of us."

"Mr. Childersleigh may be right, as he usually is," said Hemprigge, bowing deferentially to the Governor; "although here I must venture to a certain extent to differ from him. Assuredly they do not want us; but then, pardon me, is there not a difference between their declining to make proposals to us and their refusing our overtures if we made them discreetly?"

"It would be a short-sighted policy on our part," rejoined Childersleigh, "courting a rebuff or giving them the occasion to boast we had done so."

"It will be an excellent affair, as Mr. Schwartzchild said—profitable, very profitable and creditable too," murmured Hemprigge, as if to himself, yet quite loud enough to be overheard.

"So it would be, and a monstrous pity, moreover, to let the chance slip. Eh, Thornhill, what do you say?" said Schwartzchild, taking up the Manager's soliloquy and turning to one of the merchant directors from the City, a man of great wealth and few words.

"I must say I rather agree with you, Mr. Schwartzchild. After all, business is business, and I do not know that we have the right to compromise the profits of the concern and the interest of our shareholders for the sake of a scruple of delicacy, however worthy of respect."

"I assure you it was quite as much from policy as from pride I spoke as I did," returned Childersleigh. "My idea is, if we respect ourselves and teach others to respect us, it will pay us best in the long run." He looked round the table. Even the rare assents to his proposition were given coldly and reluctantly. It was very clear he did not carry the sense of the meeting with him—another hint to him that times had changed. He bit his lip and made an effort over himself.

"Well, gentlemen, I see you don't feel as I do; therefore, in the

circumstances, there can be no question as to the course we have to follow. Which of you charges himself with the business? In the circumstances the advances must be made, of course, quietly and unofficially."

"No man could manage it like yourself, Childersleigh," rejoined Thornhill; "but that, I suppose, we cannot expect, feeling as you do."

"No, really you must excuse me. Independently of not caring to expose myself to the rebuff I foresee, I cannot afford," he added, smilingly, "to compromise my reputation for tact by the failure a half-hearted advocacy would invite."

"Then had not Mr. Hemprigge better undertake it?" suggested Schwartzchild.

"Thank you," said Hemprigge, hastily; "but there can be no doubt the Governor is right in regarding it as a matter of the utmost delicacy, and certainly I have not the pretension of succeeding where he fears failure. Besides, it should be undertaken by some one of us who has personal connections with the Board of the Bosphorus,—Mr. McAlpine, perhaps; I believe he is intimate with old Mr. Brounker, the late Member of Council at Calcutta. Mr. Brounker, I happen to know, has a great deal to say in the matter."

"I'd much rather you gave the commission to any one else," returned McAlpine. "I've no faith whatever in my own powers of negotiation; and although Brounker and I are old friends, he's apt to be short, and sure to be peppery. However, Childersleigh, as I tell you cordially, in my opinion the offer ought to be made, and I am willing to charge myself with it, gentlemen, if no one else does, as a matter of duty."

"I hope you don't mind my coming forward in this way," said McAlpine, taking his friend's arm as they stepped together into the street. "As I told you plainly, I don't agree with you. My idea is that to hold back in an affair of this sort—an affair that is become matter of public notoriety—would be straining delicacy to an excess between a couple of public companies."

"Mind you're having an opinion of your own and acting upon it?" returned Childersleigh, with his frank smile. "You can't imagine it. In any affair where honour and delicacy came in question, your opinion would shake mine. But you may remember I also rested my objection on the more practical ground, that any application from us would be a mistake—first, because it would be certainly rejected; and secondly, because the Bank would in all likelihood never carry out the loan."

"As to the first, I daresay you may be very right. At any rate, your doubts make me feel far from sanguine. For the second, assuming what Hemprigge told us to be true, I can only repeat I cannot agree with you."

"I have reason to believe Hemprigge's information to be substantially correct; in fact, I may say I know it is."

"Then what on earth makes you speak as you do? What can possibly prevent the Bosphorus Bank carrying through the affair?"

"The Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey, McAlpine. If they

refuse us a part, what should you say to our stepping in and relieving them of the whole? "

McAlpine dropped his companion's arm that he might turn and stare at him more comfortably.

"Yes," Childersleigh continued, smiling complacently; "our business is based on rational speculation, is it not? That was the idea we emphasized."

"Rational speculation—yes, certainly," retorted McAlpine, resting strongly on the "rational."

"And I am delighted to think the Bank grudges us the moderate share of gain we had a fair right to look for, because I see every reason to believe we can do very much better. I intend we shall be the lions instead of the jackals, that's all—land a haul of herrings instead of sprats, and realize heavily in cash and credit."

"I would like well to know how," exclaimed McAlpine, reverting, as usual in his excitement, to his Scotch accent and idiom.

"Simply thus. It's a long story, but I'll tell it as briefly as I can, —and I know a good deal more of the secret history than Hemprigge, although I did not care to take a committee of the whole house into my confidence. When the affair was first decided upon at Constantinople, and before it got wind here, the Porte despatched Emin Pacha to Paris as its financial agent, an old acquaintance of mine, and a very clever fellow. After much parleying—unofficially—he was in full treaty with the agents of the Bosphorus Bank, and the Bank had made all its arrangements, in the event of obtaining it on satisfactory terms, for distributing the loan chiefly among English and Frankfort capitalists. At the eleventh hour a combination of Frenchmen laid their heads together to bid against the Bosphorus, Lafarge and the Société Impériale de l'Orient at their head. Emin Bey paused and waited: each day competition brought him fresh concessions and easier terms. Braithwaite, who was acting for the Bosphorus, took the alarm, as he saw the margin of profit dwindling, and his bargain, if he ever made it, likely to turn out a loss. Being a man of decision, and, in his way, a clever one, he walked straight over to Lafarge and proposed compromise and alliance against the common enemy and victim. In short, a league offensive and defensive was arranged. The Bank and the Frenchmen took advantage of the first counter-demand of the Pacha to retract all they had offered, and, executing a strategical movement in retreat, took up the earlier position occupied by the Bank before their ruinous concurrence set in. The Pacha was furious, and so was the Porte. Emin had led his Government to hope for marvellously cheap money and an unlooked-for accession of credit; for himself he had been dreaming of endless honour and glory, and heaven knows what more substantial. Now, in place of the Order of the Mejidieh, they would certainly have sent him the bowstring if it had not luckily become an anachronism. As it was, disgrace, destitution, and recall were imminent, and it became

matter of life and death for him to make, at any rate, better terms than the last the combined Shylocks were offering. So the matter rests. The capitalists believe, and Emin fears, they have nothing to do but wait. I propose that these better terms shall come from us; pique and a sense of injury will make both him and his Government eager to deal in another market. One and the other would make heavy sacrifices rather than enrich the men who have been pressing them so unconscionably."

"Well, Childersleigh," broke in McAlpine, "you're the man to make a spoon or spoil a horn, as we say in the north, only take care it isn't spoiling the horn this time. Remember, we've never done anything on the scale before, and you'll be forgetting, too, that we must be finding good strong creditable houses to bear the burden with us. Unless anger has made him lose his head, we shall have some trouble in persuading this Emin Pacha we can carry through his affair with a wet finger for him."

"All very true, only I must say you're not over-flattering in taking for granted I had overlooked it. Why, it's all as good as provided for down to the minutest details, and I intend it shall place us in a position to deal with any sums of money in future. Fortunately, our rivals have been working hard, smoothing all difficulties out of our way. When the Bosphorus people hoped to secure the whole 20,000,000*l.* for themselves, they arranged to allot it, as I told you, among their home and foreign capitalists, reserving the lion's share for themselves. Afterwards, when they had to part with the half to the Frenchmen, instead of consenting to reduce their own share in common with what then they had assigned to their backers, they most short-sightedly insisted on the others being the sole sufferers, pretending the old bargain was off, and a new one on. The men they threw over were as much disgusted as Emin Bey himself, and now, like him, they only want an opportunity to be revenged. That revenge I propose to tender them, paying them a *douceur* for accepting it. They shall pocket the very sum the sharp-dealing gentlemen of the Bosphorus originally offered them. What do you say to it all?"

"That I had not the most remote conception of the brilliant audacity of your genius, my dear fellow. They are good names, those associates you propose for us, I suppose?"

"Passable. Look here: Blumenthal's ought to have 3,000,000*l.*; Wright, Currie and Wright, as much; Koch and Herrenhausen, 2,000,000*l.*; then there are Baron Schmidt, Rausch and Zimmerman, Mildmays."

"Capital, capital! but you haven't spoken to them, and, by Jove! why I utterly forgot the commission I have undertaken, and so have you."

"Quite true, and there is no time to be lost in setting about it. You must act promptly and be refused at once, or by to-morrow morning at latest."

"Mr. Childersleigh! Hugh!"

"Pooh, pooh, my dear McAlpine, don't look outraged. You don't fancy I ask you to throw the Board over? I told you in the Court-room,

I repeated it in the street, that your failure was a foregone conclusion. As you have decided on making the attempt, you must see yourself that, in the interest of the Company, and in any case, the sooner it is made the better."

McAlpine laughed. "You're not far out there, happen what may. But mind you this, Childersleigh: I'll do my very best with Brounker. Surely it's not likely I'll happen on him in a pleasant temper; but suppose he refuse, it will take some time communicating with all these houses?"

"I'll undertake to have the answer of the London men within twenty-four hours of your bringing me his refusal. A confidential agent of mine, sharp as steel and close as wax, started yesterday for Frankfort with full credentials, and a cypher in which we can communicate by telegraph. Mustapha Pacha and Rushbrook are in Paris—his lordship fêting Emin Pacha and learning the progress of negotiations, of which the Turk makes little secret. Matters once in train here, I shall go over myself and see him in person. If you will only undertake the charge of the affair in the City during my absence, we shall be prepared at all points, and nothing, I trust and believe, can stop us in pushing it through; there will be nothing left to be done but sing the pæans of victory and pocket the gains."

"Stop one moment, Childersleigh. All this is very well; but don't forget you are acting without any authority from the Board."

"True, and I remember it perfectly. But it just came to this: If I had gone to them to ask for powers, I question greatly whether I should have got them, and nearly certainly the matter would have taken wind. It will be quite another thing when I bring it before them all cut and dried, with its fascinating figures in black and white. The absolute necessity for speed and secrecy must make an excuse they can never refuse to accept, especially when the pill is so handsomely gilded. If the worst come to the worst, and any discussion be raised, I shall look to my friends to rally round me and pull me through, and you must help us there."

"Surely, you may trust us. You're right enough, however, I dare-say. Bringing such good news and offering the Company such a prize, they'd forgive you much more than that. But when Blumenthal and those others get to questioning you about your powers to treat?"

"I shall make a perfectly clean breast of it, tell them some of the leading Directors are in the secret, and pledge my connection with the Company for the Board ratifying anything I do. In fact, I should resign my chairmanship and sell my shares forthwith were the ratification refused."

"You risk a great deal in this business, Hugh, if you risk that," said McAlpine.

"Really next to nothing at all, for the game is as good as won before it is played. Even were it less certain, the profits are worth the risks, —well worth them," he muttered reflectively: "this business ought to make me."

"I pray devoutly it may," responded McAlpine warmly; "and now for my part of it, since it appears I must stoop that you may conquer."

Hugh's predictions fulfilled themselves from point to point, nor did the result of the interview with Brounker falsify McAlpine's estimate of his friend's temper. The old Indian, who had been chafing painfully during the whole course of the dilatory negotiation, fired at McAlpine's referring to it, and positively flared when he learned the object with which he had come. The envoy at once salved his conscience and served his friend Childersleigh by an attempt at arguing the matter, which ended in Brounker not only flatly refusing to be the channel of communication with his colleagues, but pledging his personal credit to boot that the Crédit Foncier of Turkey should never have one shilling's-worth of the original scrip. The usually fervid-feeling Highlander accepted the discourteous ultimatum with the mildness of a seraph, and went off to report failure to his leader, joy in his heart and a pleasant twinkle in his eye.

Then, indeed, fairly set free to act, Hugh precipitated himself into the campaign. He showed a genius for strategy and a talent for tactics, an unflagging energy, an exhilarating sense of versatile power, that were all his own. The telegraph wires went flashing telegrams about the great European temples of Mammon; bearers of trusty messengers bore precious packets by express-trains; great moneyed names on the Continent for the first time acknowledged a common tie and brotherhood with this rising young association, whose head showed a power of combination so happy and daring. As for that head himself, if the officials of the Company, from the Managing Director to the messengers, whispered over their assiduous Governor's frequent absences, elsewhere he seemed omnipresent: now closeted in the City with some eminent capitalist; now opening and answering despatches in Harley Street; now starting coastwards in the down mail; now lunching, *tête-à-tête*, in London with some wary individual who claimed a siege in form before surrender; now being entertained in the *cercles* and *restaurants* of Paris by Parisians of distinction. Everywhere and always, through restless days and sleepless nights, with the same quiet, urbane manner, the same readiness of reply and felicity of retort, the same precision of fact and thought. Rising with the occasion, more than ever might he pride himself on the happy art of imposing his imperious will and well-defined ideas on those pompous potterers who fondly fancied he was accepting theirs, of persuading men who rated themselves among the field-marshals of the great army of finance, to carry a rifle in his ranks.

The day for the weekly meeting of the Court of the Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey had come round again. Yet, marvellous to relate, when it was assembled at half-past two in the afternoon, the Governor was absent, and his absence unaccounted for. Except during his stay in the Highlands, it was the first time such an incident had happened. For eight-and-forty hours no one had ever seen him, and no

one professed to know what had become of him. The Managing Director shook his head. It must have been quite an oversight with the Governor—a very unusual one, he must say—but it was singularly unfortunate he had made no sort of arrangements with a view to such a contingency, for he alone had the key to much of the business that ought to come on in due course. "In finance as in politics," Mr. Hemprigge went on sententiously to observe, "the most enlightened personal government has its drawbacks as well as its advantages;" and the majority of the meeting grumbled and gloomed assent to the invidious sentiment. McAlpine alone remained tranquil and impassive, but he sat silent. Hemprigge was studiously melancholy; the zealous Manager was so clearly put out at the delays interposed to the business he was rapt up in.

This affair of the loan, moreover, had predisposed many of the gentlemen to irritation against Hugh. They all knew McAlpine had broken down in his mission, and with the inconsistency of human nature were disposed to visit on Childersleigh the fulfilment of his forebodings of failure. A fixed opinion like his was, with a man in his position, apt to justify itself as a matter of course; had he formed a different one, he would have undertaken himself the task of arrangement; and had he done so, he must have succeeded there as he had so often before. His caprices and prejudices, then, had robbed the Company of so many thousands of net gain, of a clear per-centage of its next dividend. Thus Hugh's very merits, rising in judgment against him, became his condemnation, now that the tide of his popularity was turning. No wonder Hemprigge found it hard to look so sad as he did: it was more astonishing the cloud did not flit over from his face to that of McAlpine.

"After all," observed the latter gentleman, in deprecation of some inarticulate murmurs and vague grumbling,—"after all, we have lost nothing. The last accounts are that the loan stands in abeyance for the present: that there is a hitch somewhere that can't be got over."

"Nonsense, McAlpine. You know better than that," retorted Schwartzchild. "The Sultan must find money somehow for his next dividends, and he knows he's not likely to get it except from the men he's treating with now. Besides, time presses, and he can't afford to open up the whole lengthy business again. No, depend upon it the Bank knows what it's about, and Braithwaite's only turning the screw because he believes he can squeeze out harder terms. The delay means we shall lose more than we thought, that's where it is."

"If Braithwaite has been screwing them," broke in Theologos, who had come in while the orator was declaiming, "he must have overdone it. There's a measure in all things, as he seems to have found out. At least, they've just posted a telegram at the Stock Exchange, authoritatively announcing that the whole negotiation is at an end for good."

"A barefaced *canard*, no doubt," exclaimed Hemprigge.

"People believe it at any rate; they're buying Turks fast. They went up three-quarters the ten minutes I was waiting there."

"Let me remind you," interrupted Mr. Thornhill, "that time is passing, and all this utterly beside the business of the day."

"Thornhill's quite right," said McAlpine, hastily. "What's the first thing before us, Mr. Hemprigge?"

"I can tell you what it ought to have been, sir: a question of promoting a Bonded Warehouse Company at Galatz; but with regard to that this absence of the Governor is especially unfortunate——"

"I regret deeply, Mr. Hemprigge, it should have been so, and have to tender you, gentlemen, my heartfelt apologies," interrupted a familiar voice from behind, making the speaker start as if the new comer had run a gimlet into his shoulders. It was the Governor in person, who had entered quietly, unannounced and unobserved.

Mr. Hemprigge recovered himself, and extended a hand of welcome. Mr. Childersleigh touched it on his way to take possession of the chair, which McAlpine, who had been occupying it, vacated in his favour. With him he exchanged a warm and significant pressure, and then, after some promiscuous salutations, addressed himself to the meeting.

"Yes, gentlemen, I owe you many apologies for a somewhat prolonged absence, and a seeming neglect of our interests; that it was but seeming, I hope you have done me the justice to believe, or else I have laboured to little purpose since first we knew each other."

Hugh saw many of the faces around him look more or less consciously guilty; while some of them drooped under the clear look he directed rapidly on each in turn. "For," he went on, "it has been your business, or rather ours, which has made me since our last meeting so remiss in my attendance here. It was our business took me to Paris, whence I have just returned; and, as ill-luck would have it, I was detained by the steamer breaking an engine in mid-channel. I should have telegraphed the accident from Dover could I have foreseen the second delay at Redhill, where we were shunted for half-an-hour."

"You didn't chance to hear anything in Paris about the loan?" demanded Schwartzchild. "They have a report here that the Bosphorus Bank has broken with the Turkish Government."

"The report is true, Mr. Schwartzchild: I can answer for it: and I was just about to suggest we should begin by disposing of this very matter of the loan."

"But the loan isn't before the meeting. What more can be said about it?" observed Schwartzchild. "Perhaps it might have been as well had we taken your advice and never moved in it; but let by-gones be by-gones; it's no use crying over spilled milk."

"As things have turned out, Mr. Childersleigh was fortunate as usual in his forecast of the course matters were to take," observed Hemprigge, blandly; "but," he added, with an air of profound sagacity, "as it must inevitably come on again sooner or later, perhaps in the altered circumstances he might be prevailed on to reconsider his decision, and approach the Bosphorus Bank as our representative, with a view to urging our par-

ticipation in any future arrangements. I may be wrong, Mr. Childersleigh," turning to the Governor with assumed humilty; "but I almost fear you underrate the importance of a rising establishment like this being altogether excluded from an affair like that. Now, for my part, I consider even any pecuniary profit of very secondary consequence compared to the credit we may gain or lose."

An approving hum assured Mr. Hemprigge he had the feeling of the Court with him, consequently that the Governor's policy of isolation was generally condemned.

"I am delighted to find, gentlemen, you subscribe so unanimously to Mr. Hemprigge's views, for it relieves me from some anxiety. As for him, I am delighted to assure him his fears are groundless; and, indeed, his ideas appeared to me so obvious, so indisputably sound, that I have ventured to act upon them, and even push them to greater lengths, in the conviction that I might rely with confidence on your approval. You have thought me disposed to throw cold water on your very natural wish to participate in the advantages of this contract. You have been inclined to condemn me as timid, capricious, and Quixotic. On the contrary, I was more grasping than you, and more ambitious; and now I am come to tell you I have secured for you all I hoped, and more. I have won for us a position we have never held before—subject, of course, to your approval. You longed for a portion of this 20,000,000*l*. Gentlemen, I can offer you the whole. I have taken upon me to sign a preliminary minute of agreement; it only waits your ratification; there it lies." And Childersleigh threw a paper on the table.

It was a veritable *coup-de-théâtre*. It would be little to say it regained him all his old popularity. If they had regarded him before with respect and admiration, now respect had become reverence, and admiration enthusiasm. He was the alchymist who offered to his adoring devotees the philosopher's stone fresh from the crucible. He was overwhelmed with flattery and congratulations, then with questions. These he answered in the amplest and most affable manner. When he had reason to be proud of everything, absolute unreserve was his gain and game; and, as he told an unaffected, unvarnished tale, he read in his hearers' faces he had taken out a fresh lease of his dictatorship.

So did Hemprigge. As Childersleigh turned to acknowledge the Manager's almost boisterous compliments, the twitch at the corner of the lips, the half-fierce, half-despairing gleam that just flickered in the eyes, did not escape him. They left him food for after-thought, for it struck him they meant something deeper than mere envious dislike. Let them mean what they might, for the moment, and in the flush of his triumph, he indulged himself in the indiscretion of despising them. Hemprigge was the servant again, and he far more the master than ever.

The moment his duties permitted it, Hemprigge made a rush for solitude. His feelings and his late congratulations were stifling him, and he needed free liberty to vent his grief and spite. A rapid walk, which

carried him unconsciously far into the northern suburbs, did something to calm him; and when he hailed a cab to return, hope and courage were already reviving and finding voice within him. "He marks the first game, and scores tricks on the second," was his reflection, as he mounted; "yet I'd take short odds even now he never wins the rubber."

CHAPTER XXV.

Friends in Council.

Since Hugh's last encounter with Hooker, in the corridor leading to Hemprigge's room, the mysterious visits of the ex-butler had been in great measure discontinued. True, they were resumed during Mr. Childersleigh's absence in Scotland, but only to cease again on his return to town. There was evidently some closer tie between the two than their mutual concern in the Company Hemprigge managed, some secret which it seemed important Childersleigh should not come to suspect. When the Governor's grand *coup* had tumbled Hemprigge off the pedestal he had been so laboriously rearing bit by bit, it was Hooker, of all men, to whom the Manager chose to confide the mortification he strove to hide from the rest of his world. While the impending event was as yet not even scented by the touts and scouts of the Stock markets, Hooker shared the valuable secret with the Court of the Crédit Foncier and some dozen of distinguished capitalists. The very afternoon succeeding that in which Mr. Childersleigh received *carte blanche* from his enthusiastic colleagues to commit them as he pleased, the two men were closeted together in Mr. Hemprigge's private apartments.

Hemprigge had told everything, bared his inmost feelings to this strangely chosen confidant, with an impulsiveness and unreserve very uncharacteristic of the man, as if conscious of some solidarity of interests between them assuring him of silence and sympathy, as if it were a relief to unbosom himself to this queer confessor, who could have no power to give him absolution for the failure both were inclined to identify with sin. Generally all Hemprigge's dealings with his fellows were marked by a continual effort to mould and influence their opinions of him. Now, simply blurting out naked truths, as if babbling a soliloquy, he left Hooker to form his own. For the time being his tight-fitting mask lay at his feet, although now and again, from sheer habit, he reached down his hand to raise it and put it on.

"So Schwartzchild"—he was concluding his pitiful tale—"so Schwartzchild, who the very day before had been raving about making a change of Governor at the next general meeting, got up and said, as he for one had to charge himself with having done Mr. Childersleigh some injustice in this matter, he was anxious to be the first to make atonement. He would beg to suggest the decided rejection of Mr. Childersleigh's

proposal for joining a sub-committee to him for the purpose of carrying through the affair. He was sure they would agree with him that, on the contrary, they could do no better than leave Mr. Childersleigh to manage alone and unfettered all he had so well commenced."

"And the Court—what did they say to that?"

"Behaved like fools, or children. Assented with acclamation. Whereupon Childersleigh thanked them with that grand silky manner of his that winds the world round his fingers as long as all is going smooth; but he insisted on a colleague, for his own satisfaction forsooth, only begging them to let him avail himself of their flattering confidence, so far as to make the choice himself."

"He named McAlpine or Rolfganger, I suppose—one of his own clique, or a dummy?"

"Not a bit of it," returned Hemprigge, with a look of contempt at his companion's want of intelligence. "Of course he pitched on Schwartzchild. Don't you see, it was his game to throw pepper in their eyes?—it had an air of generosity about it; and then he knew as well as I did that Schwartzchild, in his frame of mind, and for sheer consistency's sake, would let him have his own way even more entirely than McAlpine, for instance. And think of the way that infernal Judas spoke of Childersleigh, and thought of me only a couple of days ago. Upon my soul, the folly, fickleness, and ingratitude of those men is disgusting!" moralized Hemprigge, with much bitterness. "But you say nothing," he added, suddenly breaking from the melancholy reverie he had been following, and turning sharply round on the other.

Hooker started, and roused himself too; but it was rather to bless than to breathe the curses the other evidently expected of him. At least, the first words that escaped his lips expressed an awe-struck admiration of Childersleigh. "He's a wonderful man, George; a most wonderful man," he ejaculated, deliberately subsiding again into contemplative abstraction, forgetting himself so far as to address his younger friend by his familiar Christian name. The fact was, nothing could appeal to Hooker's higher nature more irresistibly than the evidences of a superb capacity of money-making; it addressed itself to those tendencies to hero-worship that lie latent somewhere in every man's idiosyncrasy, if you can only hit on the spell to conjure them. There was a struggle going on between Childersleigh and Hemprigge, and an identity of aims apparently enlisted Hooker on the side of the latter. Yet this speaking proof of the enemy's strength and gifts conquered his admiration for the moment, to the exclusion of all feeling for his ally, or even himself.

"Wonderful man, very likely," snapped out Hemprigge, tartly. "If he be, so much the worse for me and for us. One thing I do know—he has most accursed luck of his own." That theory of Childersleigh's luck was generally the cordial with which Hemprigge sought to inspirit himself under the overpowering sense of defeat and inferiority.

"He has a long head, a very long head," murmured Hooker, in

wistful, regretful tones; "he's a shrewd, long-headed, most fortunate man." Perhaps at that moment he was lamenting the fate that had driven him to stand on the wrong horse, that had bound up his own fortunes with the losing man.

Possibly Hemprigge divined, or imagined he divined, what was passing through his brain.

"Long-headed or lucky, the party is made. His gain will be our loss, and that you know as well as I do."

"The news of this loan will send up our shares like bottled stout in summer. 'Gad!" said Hooker, springing up with an agility beyond his years and habits, and dragging at his ponderous watch-chain—"'Gad, the secret may leak out at any moment. I must be off to the Stock Exchange, and buy a dozen or so for the account."

Hemprigge laid his detaining hand on the other's arm: "You may as well spare yourself the trouble. The house will be closed long before you get there. Don't look so cut up; you can have your dozen or so of shares all the same. My man has been buying freely."

"You'll let me have a score or two, then, at this morning's market prices?"

"You said a dozen, not a score; however, dozen or score, you shall have them. Meanwhile, there are other fish frying than those sprats, and that infernal Childersleigh is hard at it."

"What! buying Crédit Fonciers, and forestalling the market? What an infamous shame, and he the Governor!" ejaculated Hooker.

Mr. Hooker had his own sliding-scale of morality, and too high a respect for his kind to make his very moderate personal stature the standard to measure them by.

"No, not that," said Hemprigge, smiling bitterly. "He agrees with you on the point of honour, does Mr. Childersleigh. When I just hinted at it, he was up on his high horse at once, with his ridiculous fine-drawn notions about officials of a Company having no right to trade in its shares on the strength of private information. But Mr. Childersleigh, honourable as he is, is as clever at hair-splitting as other things. I've every reason to believe he means discounting the announcement of this loan in such a bearing of old Turkish stocks as a single outsider seldom tries. If I'm right, and if the speculation pays, what with that, what with the forthcoming rise in the shares,—his holdings in the Company now are very large—what with his commissions and this extension that must be given to the business, he claims Miss Childersleigh's heritage to a certainty; it's I who tell you so."

"Nonsense, George, you can't mean that!" exclaimed Hooker, getting up and pacing the room in great agitation. "Why, from the very first you always pooh-poohed the notion."

"So I did. Otherwise, do you think I'd ever have put him in the way of being rich as I have done? Perhaps I undervalued him; certainly I never dreamed of such a run of luck. Anyhow, up to yesterday I still

flattered myself he'd miss it by a mile. Now my eyes are opened, and I think differently. Unless, indeed, unless——"

"Pooh, pooh! You're down on your luck to-day, nothing more."

"I am down on my luck, and with very good reason. But it's not that. No, I knew Childersleigh's affairs to a shilling when we started this infernal Company, and I've noted his incomings and watched his outgoings ever since. I am pretty sure of what he makes, and if I don't know quite so much of what he spends, still I can guess enough for all practical purposes. Oh, you may believe me," and he shook his head.

"Ah, why did you ever take him up at all, George? Why must you go and pitch upon him of all men in the world?"

"Why? Because, as you know very well," returned Hemprigge, savagely, "I saw he was the very man for my purpose, and was I not right? If it had only been matter of indifference to us whether he grew rich or not, acknowledge there never was a better hit."

"I always told you it was venturesome—a risky trifling with edge tools."

"I'll swear you never told me anything of the sort," returned Hemprigge, fiercely. "You rubbed your hands and chuckled when I let you know I had him safe."

"Well, well, perhaps so. It doesn't signify a bit arguing," said Hooker, in some confusion; "and you mustn't forget that happen what may later, he coins gold for us in the meantime."

"You never could see an inch beyond the farthing dip you carry in your brain to grope your way by; and to have a shilling to-day you'd risk the certainty of a sovereign to-morrow," rejoined Hemprigge contemptuously and eloquently metaphorical. "Don't you see it's my curse that this man's prosperity and mine are bound up together; and I'm like the man whose life hangs on the enemy's he'd give half the world to murder? If I injure the Crédit Foncier I open my own veins; every shilling I take from it is blood of my own; and yet if things go on prospering, in another year—in less than a year—he makes good his claim to all that money."

"Take shillings from the Crédit Foncier!" said Hooker, opening his eyes. "What can you be speaking of? Why, happen what may, the income you draw from the Crédit Foncier makes you wealthy; and then—I have sunk every penny of my property in the Company."

"You never will teach yourself to look to the future, then," repeated Hemprigge impatiently; "and you make your pettifogging calculations without allowing anything for hatred. Only think what it is to be jostled and foiled at every turn by the man you made yourself—laughed at and looked down upon to boot; to feel through him you have been working heart and soul to your own loss."

"I had hoped you were far too well brought up to go in for hatred," returned Mr. Hooker, shaking his head mournfully; "or for spiting other people, especially when you've got to pay the costs of doing it yourself.

No, no"—and he passed from the melancholy to the indignant mood—"if you must harm Childersleigh, take care you don't hurt the Crédit Foncier—the Company I've put all my savings in!"

"I can't tell you as yet what I may do. I may be compelled to act on the spur of the moment, and at any moment. Meantime, my advice to you would be—and the advice is sound, depend upon it—sell when this new loan is brought out, and wait on. You'll make a splendid thing of it in the meantime, and be on the safe side whatever happens."

"Sell!" shrieked Hooker; "sell! with the shares rising steadily every day, and premiums on fresh promotion schemes coming in every month. Sell! do you say; while every morning sees me a richer man? Sell! and give up my only pleasure, my marking the quotations of the day in the share-lists, and reading of rises in the City articles?"

"You must do as you please," returned Hemprigge coldly; "only recollect you were warned in time, and if anything should happen, don't blame me."

"What *should* happen? You don't mean to do anything to hurt the Company—to hurt my property? If I thought it, George"—and Hooker's voice trembled with emotion, and his figure dilated as he rose from his chair in all the majesty of outraged virtue—"if I thought so I'd walk straight off and put Mr. Childersleigh up to your moves."

Hemprigge looked at him queerly. "There, if you have had out all you mean to say on this subject, sit down again and change it. We row in the same boat, as you know very well, and you don't fancy, for my own sake, I'd throw you overboard. In any case the shares will be all right for some time to come, I tell you, so you needn't be in any hurry. Have you been at 'The Cedars' lately?"

"Not for some days past, and I've seen nothing of the girls since they came back. How do things stand with you in that quarter?"

"I don't well know, and I don't very greatly care. Better rather than they were, I think. That prig Purkiss gives me the run of the house. I can turn him round my finger, at any rate. One thing is, of late Childersleigh comes there very little."

"A good thing too—a great point gained—everything, indeed," rejoined Hooker, his fluttering fear of Childersleigh breaking out again, to the huge irritation of Hemprigge, who went on hastily,—

"No, it's very far from everything: if there were no Childersleigh in the world—and I'm sure I wish to heaven there were not—there's the stupid girl herself. Upon my soul, sometimes, as things are, I hesitate."

"No, no, don't say that, George, don't say that," interrupted Hooker eagerly. Strange the fascination the girl exercised over men so dissimilar. "It'll all come right yet, never fear, if you only stick to her; and she can't possibly refuse you if you go the right way to work; rich, and clever, and good-looking as you are. Next to Childersleigh——"

"Confound Childersleigh! Am I always to have that infernal name dinned into my ears and thrown in my teeth?"

"Well, well," said the other soothingly, "I meant no harm. But it was the girl we were talking of. How do you get on with her?" he asked, with a paternal interest.

"Oh, pretty tolerably. I've hunted up a common object, found a common subject of talk. You'd never guess it. I've taken up with an Institution for the Widows and Orphans of Bankers' Clerks; they were building it out by the Heath, but it had come to a standstill for want of funds. Men like Sir Basil never get past the first hundred guineas. I came to the rescue with a munificent donation, given anonymously, you understand; but Purkiss most unluckily let the cat out of the bag—ha, ha, ha! Then, having been dragged into the light, much to my disgust, I did violence to my modesty, and made the best of it. I acknowledged the profound interest I took in many similar charities, and put myself to considerable trouble in removing some legal difficulties as to the site of this one. In fact, I'm honorary secretary to the ladies' committee, and obliged, in course of business, to be in constant communication with its members. You must have seen the secretary's name figuring in the charitable advertisements?"

"My reading generally stops at the share-list and columns of advertisements," returned Hooker dryly. "Well, you've made your opportunity very cleverly, and no one knows better how to use it."

"Perhaps so; but the girls cling together like Siamese Twins. I never have three minutes of Lucy before I hear that infernal rustle of the other one's dress—I've got to know it so well. Then, though Lucy comes out of her shell, and speaks quick enough when we talk of the charity, she's back in it fast enough when she feels me treading ever so far off on the edge of delicate ground. One would fancy she was all feelers. As she sees me warm she begins to freeze."

"Do you ever meet Lord Rushbrook there?" asked Hooker, abruptly.

"Luckily Rushbrook's in Paris for the time being. With his impertinent mocking manner, he's the last man next to—I mean, he's the last man I would wish to see at 'The Cedars.'"

"You're wrong there. On the contrary, from what I hear, he's the very man likely to help you to what you want. It's not for nothing I visit at 'The Cedars,' although I am shown up to the housekeeper's instead of into the drawing-room. Rushbrook's sweet on Miss Maude and she on him, or will be; so they say there, at least. He fetched her out of a fog or something of that sort, down in Scotland, and she chooses to think he saved her life."

"I heard something of it," said Hemprigge, musingly. "Yes, I see: if her mind's filled with love-making of her own, she'll have the less time to bother herself about mine. If his lordship goes there much, with their present habits, Lucy will be always getting in the way, and the two girls will cool, if they don't quarrel. If Miss Childersleigh marries and leaves the house, why, Lucy will be forced to go too, or think herself so, which comes to the same thing. Trust Purkiss to make it too hot for her."

"Exactly; while my lord heats the iron for you, you stand quietly by ready to strike in when it's hot. Eh, what do you say to that advice? Now, do you tell me I can never see beyond my hand?" asked Hooker with much pride. The taunt about the farthing candle had been rankling in his breast.

"You know you put me out and made me say what I never meant. I was vexed and tried to vex you," returned Hemprigge, reaching him his hand. "Don't I always come to you for advice? Do I ever take an important step without consulting you? And that reminds me, I must be gone. Send over to-morrow morning to Lothbury and let me know how many of those shares you want. I'll send a memorandum of it to my broker's."

Thus Mr. Hemprigge's conversational tact brought to a pleasant termination a dialogue that had threatened at one time to end abruptly or disagreeably, and when he took leave of Mr. Hooker, the elder gentleman's face was beaming with its customary expression of benevolence.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Love among the Thorns.

Hemprigge's jealousy had foreboded a secret before there was one. It was by slow degrees it dawned on Hugh Childersleigh that Lucy was becoming a disturbing element in his life—occupying him at times to the prejudice of all he had been most bound up in. He was startled to find masses of rich brown hair casting their shadow on columns of calculation, to meet the gaze of soft hazel eyes when he cast his own into his future. Had he found romance thus blending itself with routine in those earlier days of Harley Street, when the lovely orphan had been left by fate a shuttlecock for the battledores of Hooker and fortune, he might have set it down complacently to sheer philanthropy and his good nature. But now Maude's affection had cottoned Lucy in eider-down, and Sir Basil, who had first petted her for his daughter's sake, had come to spoil her for his own, while the subdued antipathy of Purkiss was but the dash of vinegar that gave piquancy to the sweets of her existence. Thus there was little room left him for illusions, and what there were must have been dispelled by the more than indifference with which he saw the *rapprochement* of Maude and Rushbrook. He had broken with the feelings of the past, was he to weave new webs to embarrass his future? To steal from the Cavalier poet, was he to tangle himself in the hair and fetter himself with the eye of Lucy Winter, when his work was still undone and while he had pretty nearly the wide world to mate himself in? Was he to perpetrate a gratuitous folly, and wantonly give society reason to condole with him on an excessively bad marriage?

The practical good sense he had cultivated with an assiduity so great

answered peremptorily in the negative. It warned him to be wise in time, and compromised with his strong liking for Lucy by telling him not to make her unhappy, but to keep away in the meantime from "The Cedars." Mr. Hemprigge's information, then, had been perfectly accurate, and since their return from Scotland Hugh had seen much less than usual of his Killoden friends. But it is given to no mortal to be always safe, and the *convenances* of society must have their say in the arrangements of people who live for it. Hugh did pass an occasional evening at Hampstead, enjoyed it, and came away uneasy and remorseful. With all its slight *arrières pensées* of wasted time, the glimpses of soft domestic life at Killoden had fallen like a cool shadow across the hot rugged paths the man must struggle up who hastes to be rich. Perhaps the reaction had set in from that first flush of pleasurable excitement with which he had learned that work is a thousand times preferable to idleness. He had fallen in love with labour, and like other cases of love at first sight, a maturer acquaintance with the object of his adoration may have made him acquainted with a multitude of jarring little incompatibilities of temper. More than before it was the sense of duty that kept him steadily faithful to the ties he had formed then; that bound him to the fulfilment of those vows of success he had solemnly taken on himself. Now he felt for the time involuntarily grateful to any one who should lull him into a moment's oblivion of the hard practical details of the life he was living; who should lure him away from thoughts of day-books and mental computations of bankers' balances—grateful at the time and often resentful afterwards. Yet with it all he did himself and Lucy so much justice as to confess in his calmer moments that the gratitude came of his higher, the resentment of his baser nature. He told himself the secret of his warming to Lucy while he cooled for Maude lay in this—that the one girl's heart vibrated in harmony with chords in the depths of his own, the other's, with her careful training and long habits of thought, had been merely in seeming sympathy with its surface. His daily life worked on no longer with its easy play of mechanism, concentrating its labour on the single purpose of winning wealth for the sake of the world. On the contrary, its daily revolution involved a perceptible struggle where something in him embarrassed him with its faint remonstrances against this prostitution of his powers to unworthy ends; something that poisoned the gains and the financial game he had once set such store by; that, like the Roman's slave, whispered him in each hour of his triumph that he was not only a mortal, but a trifling and mistaken one. It was a feeble influence as yet, but he was compelled to confess to himself that it was gaining strength; and never did he feel so strongly the irksome consciousness of its being true and right and destined to prevail in the long run, as after a quiet hour slipped away in the company of Lucy. So that now, while he was his old self again—while his well-regulated mind was swinging pendulum-like in the familiar curves—when back in the City atmosphere, and in contact with men like Hemprigge, he became

keenly alive to all he had to fear from that innocent-looking genius of evil, Miss Lucy Winter. It was then his common-sense used to confirm him in those good resolutions that only yielded, as we have said, to the conventionalities.

There was another aspiration too, and an elevated one, in its way, whence he drew strength and courage for combating these weaknesses —the idea of rebuilding his family fortunes, and living as his fathers had done, in his family home. As his hopes of returning to Childersleigh brightened, Hugh had paid it more frequent visits. He could accept Marxby's hospitalities without a pang, as the chances of the good-humoured contractor's speedy eviction began to harden into certainties. Now-a-days, in the prospect of speedily coming home to them, he found the old family portraits who smiled down on him from the oak panels, as he sipped his wine at the venerable old mahogany, the pleasantest of company.

When he felt a depressing sense of the vanity of earthly toils, of the emptiness of human wishes, stealing strong upon him; when he was conscious of a yielding of the springs that had given him his grand *élan;* when he was even haunted with unwholesome visions of hermitages, angel-brightened, where, seated on the threshold in placid idleness, he might listen to the faint murmurs of the troubled world he had quitted; when perchance he dreamed in his nightmares of love and peaceful cottages, as rational people do dream, mistaking for the springs of happiness what would prove in their waking moments the bitter fountains of sorrow,—then he used to seek his favourite and unfailing tonic among the old oaks of Childersleigh Park. The church paths that crossed it were free to him with all the world, and thither he used to go, unembarrassed by the friendly presence of Marxby, and contrasting the present and its prospects with the past and its cares, would confirm in the very sanctuary of nature his wavering allegiance to Mammon. Like the giant of the old myth, in treading his mortgaged acres, he drew new strength for his grapple with the visionary promptings of unworldliness; and thus in a profounder sense than other City men, recruited for the work he had to do in town, in the fresh air of the country.

Old Patterson had renewed his youth, as the rumours of the lucky Mr. Childersleigh's growing wealth assumed marvellous development at his place in Surrey. The old man stepped about more lightly among his flowers, tending his favourites with a greater zeal and interest than ever, and, in his recovered buoyancy of spirits, took to whistling in most unmusical strains his country air of "There's nae luck aboot the house."

"'Deed, Mr. Hugh," he said to his master, who, coming on him unexpectedly one day, complimented him on the ease and spirit of his execution—"'Deed, Mr. Hugh, I had no heart to do it as long as I thought the gudeman was gone for good, but now that we're like to have him among us again, I make the most of what's left of the black time, that I may enjoy the more my blink of sunshine when it comes."

"A cheering bit of philosophy for us that, Patterson; but you're coming out of the shadow already. Why, man, you're an inch taller, and heaven knows how many years younger, since that morning of the funeral."

"Ay, there's many a thing happened sin' that sour winter morning, thank God; and I wouldn't say but what, among your grand other doings, you've put me on another year or two. 'Od, Mr. Hugh, it's no like the great man of business they say you're become, to go burdening yourself longer than you can help with a feckless worn-out old body," said Patterson, smiling grimly.

Hugh laughed as he stretched out his fingers for a pinch from the old man's snuff-box. "The wisest of us are sometimes left to ourselves; and, by-the-by, what I came to speak to you about now was another piece of extravagance I am thinking of. The end of the hothouses there would be the best place for a new range of pineries, would it not?"

Hugh never acknowledged to himself in so many words that he had as good as received Miss Childersleigh's money, but insensibly he came more and more to think and plan as if the inheriting it were a certainty. To be sure many men would have said that his connection with the Crédit Foncier alone might have justified his returning, if he had chosen, to his old home. But that was not Childersleigh's opinion. He had no idea of precipitating his return without carrying with him the ample means of leading a train of easy luxury; no fancy for risking a second family eclipse. It cost him little philosophy to wait. Fortune had so petted him in the last two years that he had come to pin his faith on her favours. She had been steadily filling his cup, and he hardly ever dreamed now of a slip between it and his lip.

Meantime, while he was still making strong running, and backers and layers making him the favourite in the race with time; while Lucy was tripping across the course before him, sometimes diverting his eyes and thoughts from the winning-post; while Maude, whom he had once identified with the prize, had dropped out of his life, and, busied with affairs of her own, was only watching the match among comparatively indifferent spectators—while matters were thus passing with Hugh, Lucy herself had known gnawing anxieties. The happier she had felt in her new home, the more loth she felt to leave it. Yet again she became the prey to the old curse of uncertainty; once more she began to be haunted by the old sense of desolation. After the sharp brush of buffeting that followed on Miss Childersleigh's death, she had been swept up into this sheltered nook, where she had been sunning herself pleasantly since; but, waif as she was, circumstances threatened to wash her away again into the brawling stream of life. It was not that her new-found friends had cooled to her—it was not that Maude had changed—still less was Lord Rushbrook, as Hooker had surmised, the involuntary cause of her trouble. Had it been so, she might have borne the thought of separation better. Had the ties that bound her to them all been slowly fretting themselves through, it would have been less painful to snap them. On

the contrary, Maude was never more sisterly; Sir Basil was more paternal than ever. Yet in the very affection that had adopted her, and sought to make her stay seem more natural, she only saw expulsion from the home she clung more closely to as she feared to lose it.

The lives of our personages were becoming very much a game of cross-purposes; Lucy, and that unlucky August at Killoden, seemed likely to weave the plot of a tragedy of errors. Here was honest Hemprigge, only longing for an opportunity to lay his fortune at her feet and offer her a home of her own—an opportunity which she, who had neither home nor fortune, steadily denied him. Here was Hugh Childersleigh, with a task to do, and short time to do it in, wasting precious minutes in worse than profitless speculation on her feelings and fancies. And, finally, there was George Childersleigh, who would have given his very life to make her happy, apparently bent miserably upon driving her back on the wretchedness his sister had snatched her from.

Yes, Captain Childersleigh had fallen in with the prevailing fashion, and, like so many other people, was deeply in love with Miss Winter. Assuredly there was a force of fascination about her very dangerous to herself as to others. Hers was not the blaze of attraction that puts you on your guard. She stole somehow into the affections, and like the soft-voiced witch in *Thalaba*, shackled you in the gossamer bonds you never felt her twine. She was just the girl to create bitter enmities in her sex, because, when they awoke to the unsuspected influence, and in the first burst of jealousy and passion, they might with so clear a conscience tax her with treachery. She was just the girl to turn an admirer's fondness to gall, because he might so easily confound her unconscious art with heartless coquetry. Then she was so clearly distrustful of herself, that no one pretending to a knowledge of mankind, who watched her quiet manners and fatally winning ways, could well fail to credit her with accomplished hypocrisy. Even Captain Childersleigh, who had no shade of ill-nature about him, and of all living men was most likely to see an angel in the woman he worshipped, could hardly rid his remorseful mind of blasphemous suspicions, when first he openly spoke his love and had his answer. Days before, while nervously hesitating about committing his happiness to a question, the Captain had been gradually opening his trenches, making his approaches more and more ostentatiously under the very eyes of the lady of his love, and supposing her amply forewarned at the moment he gave the assault, had brought himself to hope for nothing more than a mere formal resistance.

The assault had come off the morning they were to leave him behind at Killoden, to follow a few days later. Maude had gone upstairs, and was superintending the packing; and Lucy was preparing to leave the breakfast-room to follow her, when George whispered her, in a voice that his conscience perhaps made him fancy even more significantly tremulous than it was, an entreaty for one parting turn down by the borders of the lake to the little waterfall.

"To the waterfall!—oh yes,—yes, certainly, Captain Childersleigh, if you wish it," she replied, smiling, speaking and looking, as he thought, with a hopeful embarrassment. The truth being merely that she was delighted with the idea of a farewell stroll that bright morning, when all they were going to leave looked so lovely, while she felt at the same time the path of duty led up to Maude and the maids.

George, however, put his own construction on it, and brightened accordingly, although his heart would keep thumping hard on his ribs. How he wished that noisy pack in the kennels could have been gagged, as they hailed the well-known figures with open throats, drawing on them the attention of the group of keepers and gillies who came lounging out of the neighbouring outhouses. As George acknowledged the valued dependants' greeting much more slightly than usual, he glanced back fearfully at the windows of the lodge, terribly afraid the ill-timed yelping might draw the attention of the inmates, perhaps mar the *tête-à-tête* and his plans for life. All was safe, however, and half reassured, he hurried Lucy in under cover of the pines; rather surprised she was at being denied her customary exchange of salutations with her musical circle of four-footed friends, setters, retrievers, and terriers.

Once through the little wood, and down by the lake, the path became narrow and broken, and Lucy picked her way in advance, her eyes on her thin-soled shoes, and her thoughts more concerned with her feet than anything else in the world, while her companion followed in silence, far less attentive than usual to the hundred chances of touching her hand and looking in her eyes, offered by the difficulties of the road. But once arrived on the little patch of slippery green, perennially watered by the breaking spray from the brawling waterfall, she had no reason to complain of his silence. With the nervous energy of a man who distrusts his own resolution, he grappled almost roughly with the subject nearest his heart, and Lucy found herself brought face to face with a proposal when she had never dreamed of love-making. Had the waterfall shot upwards in a Geyser, had a thunderbolt fallen from the cloudless sky among the flight of teal that floated among the rushes of the lake, she could scarcely have been more taken aback.

George began with a beating heart, a swelling throat, and sentences sadly deficient in prepositions, conjunctions, and those secondary parts of speech that are so helpful to lucidity of expression. But soon in his earnestness forgetting himself and his tremors, he spoke and pled with all the rude poetry and eloquence of sincerity. As he spoke and watched her out of his eager eyes, he saw a cloud settle down over the vacant astonishment on her face, and its blank surprise give way to pain. His love made him quick to read the signs he feared, and the sudden revulsion of hope and feeling stopped the rush of words, and sent them choking back on his heart. Had not that pained expression been so unmistakable, he might have taken her long silence for encouragement. The truth was she liked him so well, they had been such good friends, he had been so

invariably and unostentatiously kind to her, that she hated to hurt him. Then for the moment she never asked herself what her own feelings were or might be, she only thought of Sir Basil's and his daughter's. She shuddered as she pictured their regarding her as a viper they had cherished, only to sting them just when they would feel it most. She felt as if this unwelcome proposal had made her partner in a terrible sin; as if each moment the interview lasted was plunging her deeper in crime. Certainly, except for the grace of her attitude of pitiable confusion, for the soft brightness of her eyes glittering through their tears, a reptile would have been the last similitude any one would have thought of finding for her,—least of all the only witness of the scene.

"Don't let me distress you more, Miss Winter," said George, speaking at last with a violent effort. "You have said nothing, but I have heard enough," and he turned slowly to move away.

"Oh, Captain Childersleigh," she burst out, "I never dreamed, never suspected anything of all this."

"Impossible, Miss Winter, impossible: you must have seen, must have guessed! but no," he said, asserting himself, "I know you are candour itself. My wretched ill-luck has taken you by surprise, when I hoped to have found you all prepared, and in short, when I thought I was managing so cleverly, I behaved more like an idiot than ever,—just like me. Well, have you any scrap of comfort for me? I should content myself with very little. Only say there's hope, and I'll leave you; just as much I mean," he added anxiously, "as there would be for any other fellow in the wide world, and I'll go away tolerably happy."

Lucy summoned all her courage for the explanation. As it chanced, his last words had made it easier to her.

"No, no, Captain Childersleigh," she said, sorrowfully; "it would be a miserable return for all your goodness, if I caused you one moment of doubt or uneasiness I could spare you. No, if anything in my power to promise were worth the hoping for, least of any one in the world could I promise it to you."

"Good God! what do you mean, Lucy—Miss Winter? That you could never bring yourself to care for me in any case?"

"I mean," said Lucy, blushing terribly, but speaking much more firmly now, "that, happen what might, I could never listen to a son of Sir Basil's, a brother of Maude's. Just think for a moment of my position in your family, although I know your generous heart has always made you forget it."

"Your position in our family! Why, my father treats you like a daughter; Maude loves you as her sister: and I——"

"Reason the more, surely," broke in Lucy, quickly, "that I should repay their thousand benefits, their fondness, all their confidence in me, by anticipating their wishes, instead of outraging them. Pray hear me to an end," she went on, as she saw him about to break out. "No one knows better than you, that with all his kindness to me, what you dream

of now would be the last thing Sir Basil would desire for you. If you really care for me at all, help me and be frank. Is it not so?"

"If I care?" George, in his eagerness to avoid the main issue, was impulsively throwing himself into the opening Lucy had rashly made for him.

She could hardly help smiling through her tears. "I am answered, you see," she said quietly.

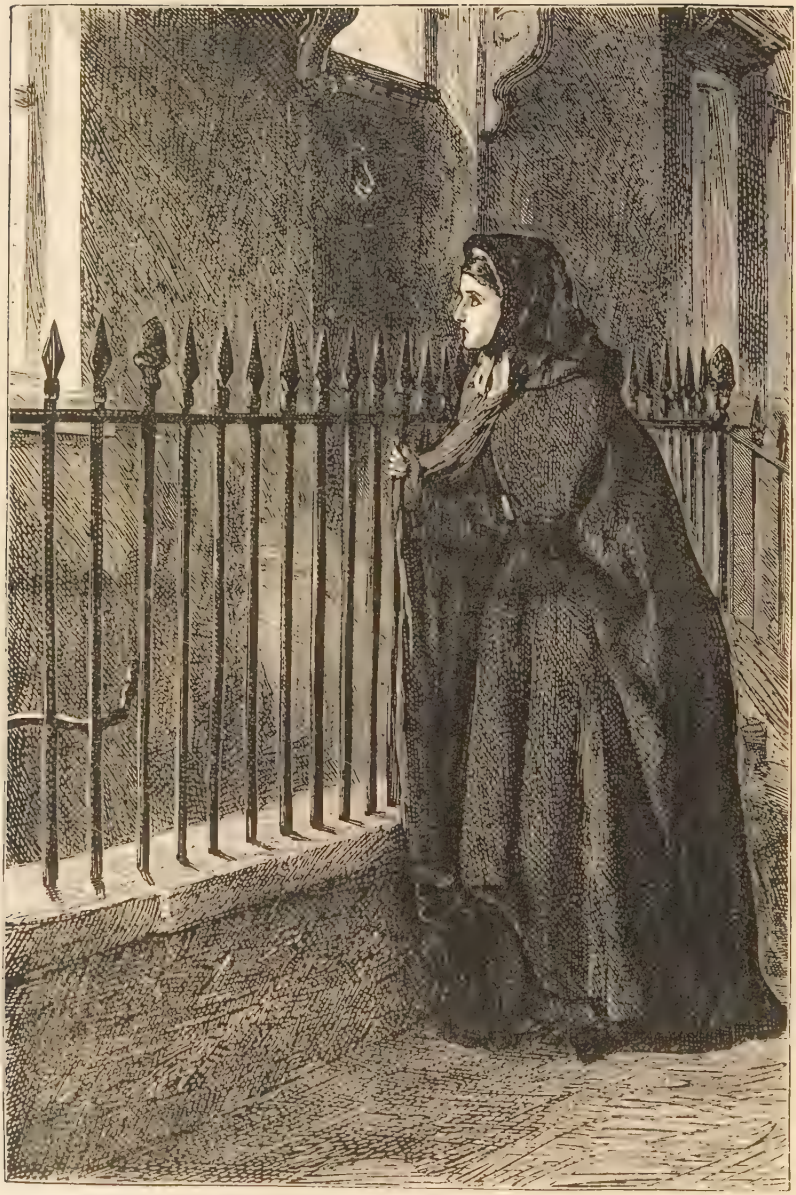
"My father may have other views. I have never spoken to him—he is unprepared—he might be surprised at first—but fond of you as he is—in a short time——"

"And what would be my position meanwhile, and my feelings afterwards? I know you to be unselfishness itself. Put yourself in my place. Seeing love change to dislike, perhaps, and friendship turn into suspicion; to have Maude looking coldly on me in spite of herself. Why, for nothing the world could give to me would I submit to it!" she added, impulsively.

"Nor for any one in the world?" he asked, in a sudden spasm of jealousy, shooting in a lurid flash across a mind clouded with doubt and pain. But the jealousy passed like the lightning, and, repenting his violence, he resumed with a melancholy smile, "I forget myself, Miss Winter, but you will forgive me the fault you cause yourself; and in spite of all, I will trust something to time. You cannot have the heart to rob me of all my hope."

"Trust nothing to time," she answered, with soft decision. "Believe me, time can do nothing here—not in that way, at least. But if it be any comfort to you, be sure I suffer bitterly for the pain I may inflict. I owe you so much, and it seems so hard to be made the instrument of grieving you."

Poor Lucy felt herself treading the crest of a precipice, with an ugly gulf yawning on either hand. If she was too hard, she hurt the feelings of the man to whom she had never felt so warmly, although with a warmth without the faintest tinge of love; if she became too melting and compassionate she shook his faith in her firmness, and perhaps prepared him fresh trouble. But the interview brought itself to a close somehow, and the two had never met since they parted at Killoden. George had stayed there for some time, nursing his disappointment or combating it, and then joined his regiment without passing by London. Sir Basil grumbled that his favourite son should not have paid him the established tribute of a passing day or two *en route;* and Maude wrote her brother reproachful notes, and made Lucy the confidante of her indignation. And Lucy knew herself the guilty cause of all, and felt, in her self-condemnation and despair, that she must inevitably sooner or later carry into effect her self-imposed sentence of banishment.



She had a sort of Protestant Nun's dress on.

THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JUNE, 1870.

Put Yourself in His Place.

CHAPTER XLII.

"BETTER for me if I had, then I could chop and change from one to another as you would have me. No, mother; I daresay if I had never seen Grace I should have loved Jael. As it is, I have a great affection and respect for her, but that is all."

"And those would ripen into love if once you were married."

"They might. If it came to her flinging that great arm round my neck in kindness, she once saved my life with by brute force, I suppose a man's heart could not resist her. But it will never come to that while my darling lives. She is my lover, and Jael my sister and my dear friend. God bless her! and may she be as happy as she deserves. I wish I could get a word with her: but that seems out of the question to-night; I shall slip away to bed and my own sad thoughts."

With this he retired unobserved.

In the morning he asked Jael if she would speak to him alone.

"Why not?" said she, calmly.

They took a walk in the shrubbery.

"I tried hard to get a word with you yesterday, but you were so taken up with that puppy."

"He is very good company."

"I have seen the time when I was as good; but it is not so easy to chatter with a broken heart."

"That is true. Please come to the point and tell me what you want of me now."

This was said in such a curious tone, that Henry felt quite discouraged.

He hesitated a moment and then said, "What is the matter with you? You are a changed girl to me. There's something about you so cold and severe; it makes me fear I have worn out my friend as well as lost my love; if it is so, tell me, and I will not intrude my sorrow any more on you."

There was a noble and manly sadness in the way he said this, and Jael seemed touched a little by it.

"Mr. Henry," said she, "I'll be frank with you. I can't forgive you leaving the factory that night without saying a word to me; and, if you consider what I had done before you used me so, and what I suffered in consequence of your using me so—not that you will ever know all I suffered, at least I hope not—no, I have tried to forgive you; for, if you are a sinner, you are a sufferer—but it is no use, I can't. I never shall forgive you to my dying day."

Henry Little hung his head dejectedly. "That is bad news," he faltered. "I told you why I did not bid you good-by except by letter: it was out of kindness. I have begged your pardon for it all the same. I thought you were an angel: but I see you are only a woman; you think the time to hit a man is when he is down. Well, I can but submit. Good-by. Stay one moment, let me take your hand, you won't refuse me that." She did not deign a word; he took her hand and held it. "This is the hand and arm that worked with me like a good mate: this is the hand and arm that overpowered a blackguard and saved me: this is the hand and arm that saved my Grace from a prison and public shame. I must give them both one kiss, if they knock me down for it. There—there—good-by, dear Jael, good-by! I seem to be letting go the last thing I have to cling to in the deep waters of trouble."

Melted by this sad thought, he held his best friend's hand till a warm tear dropped on it. That softened her; the hand, to which he owed so much, closed on his and detained him.

"Stay where you are. I have told you my mind, but I shall *act* just as I used to do. I'm not proud of this spite I have taken against you, don't you fancy that. There—there, don't let us fret about what can't be helped; but just you tell me what I can *do* for you."

Young Little felt rather humiliated at assistance being offered on these terms. He did not disguise his mortification.

"Well," said he, rather sullenly, "beggars must not be choosers. Of course I wanted you to tell me where I am likely to find her?"

"I don't know."

"But you left Hillsborough with her?"

"Yes, and went to York. But there I left her, and she told me she should travel hundreds of miles from York. I have no notion where she is."

Little sighed. "She could not trust even you."

"The fewer one trusts with a secret the better."

"Will she never return? Will she give up her father as well as me? Did she fix no time? Did she give you no hint?"

"No, not that I remember. She said that depended on you."

"On me?"

"Yes."

Here was an enigma.

They puzzled over it a long time. At last Jael said, "She wrote a letter to you before she left: did she say nothing in that? Have you got the letter?"

"Have I got it? The last letter my darling ever wrote to me! Do you think it ever leaves me night or day?"

He undid one of his studs, put his hand inside, and drew the letter out warm from his breast. He kissed it and gave it to Jael. She read it carefully and looked surprised. "Why, you are making your own difficulties. You have only got to do what you are told. Promise not to fall foul of that Coventry, and not to tempt her again, and you will hear of her. You have her own word for it."

"But how am I to let her know I promise?"

"I don't know; how does everybody let everybody know things now-a-days? they advertise."

"Of course they do—in the second column of *The Times*."

"You know best." Then, after a moment's reflection, "Wherever she is she takes in the Hillsborough papers, to see if there's anything about you in them."

"Oh, do you think so?"

"Think so? I am sure of it. I put myself in her place."

"Then I will advertise in *The Times* and the Hillsborough papers."

He went into the library and wrote several advertisements. This is the one Jael preferred:—

"H. L. to G. C. I see you are right. There shall be no vengeance except what the law may give me, nor will I ever renew that request which offended you so justly. I will be patient."

He had added an entreaty that she would communicate with him, but this Jael made him strike out. She thought that might make Grace suspect his sincerity. "Time enough to put that in, a month hence, if you don't hear from her."

This was all I think worth recording in the interview between Jael and Henry, except that at parting he thanked her warmly, and said, "May I give you one piece of advice in return? Mr. Richard Raby has fallen in love with you, and no wonder. If my heart was not full of Grace I should have fallen in love with you myself, you are so good and so beautiful; but he bears a bad character. You are wise in other people's affairs, pray don't be foolish in your own."

"Thank you," said Jael, a little drily. "I shall think twice before I give my affections to any young man."

Henry had a word with his mother before he went, and begged her not to prepare disappointment for herself by trying to bring Jael and him together. "Besides, she has taken a spite against me. To be sure it is not very deep; for she gave me good advice, and I advised her not to throw herself away on Dissolute Dick."

Mrs. Little smiled knowingly and looked very much pleased, but she said nothing more just then. Henry Little returned to Hillsborough, and put his advertisement in *The Times* and the Hillsborough journals.

Two days afterwards, Ransome called on him, with the *Hillsborough Liberal*. "Is this yours?" said Ransome.

"Yes. I have reason to think she will write to me, if she sees it."

"Would you mind giving me your reason?"

Little gave it, but with so much reticence, that no other man in Hillsborough but Ransome would have understood.

"Hum!" said he, "I think I can do something with this."

A period of expectation succeeded, hopeful at first, and full of excitement; but weeks rolled on without a word from the fugitive, and Little's heart sickened with hope deferred. He often wished to consult Jael Dence again; he had a superstitious belief in her sagacity. But the recollection of her cold manner deterred him. At last, however, impatience and the sense of desolation conquered, and he rode over to Raby Hall.

He found his uncle and his mother in the dining-room. Mr. Raby was walking about looking vexed, and even irritable.

The cause soon transpired. Dissolute Dick was at that moment in the drawing-room, making hot love to Jael Dence. He had wooed her ever since that fatal evening when she burst on society full-blown. Raby, too proud and generous to forbid his addresses, had nevertheless been always bitterly averse to them, and was now in a downright rage; for Mrs. Little had just told him she felt sure he was actually proposing.

"Confound him!" said Henry, "and I wanted so to speak to her."

Raby gave him a most singular look, that struck him as odd at the time, and recurred to him afterwards.

At last steps were heard overhead, and Dissolute Dick came downstairs.

Mrs. Little slipped out, and soon after put her head into the dining-room to the gentlemen, and whispered to them "YES." Then she retired to talk it all over with Jael.

At that monosyllable Mr. Raby was very much discomposed.

"There goes a friend out of this house; more fools we. You have lost her by your confounded folly. What is the use spooning all your days after another man's wife? I wouldn't have had this happen for ten thousand pounds. Dissolute Dick! he will break her heart in a twelvemonth."

"Then why, in heaven's name, didn't you marry her yourself?"

"Me! at my age? No; why didn't *you* marry her? You know she fancies you. The moment you found Grace married, you ought to have secured this girl, and lived with me; the house is big enough for you all."

"It is not so big as your heart, sir," said Henry. "But pray don't speak to me of love or marriage either."

"Why should I? The milk is spilt; it is no use crying now. Let us go and dress for dinner. Curse the world—it is one disappointment."

Little himself was vexed, but he determined to put a good face on it, and to be very kind to his good friend Jael.

She did not appear at dinner, and when the servants had retired, he said, "Come now, let us make the best of it. Mother, if you don't mind, I will settle five thousand pounds upon her and her children. He is a spendthrift, I hear, and as poor as Job."

Mrs. Little stared at her son. "Why, she has refused him."

Loud exclamations of surprise and satisfaction!

"A fine fright you have given us. You said, 'Yes.'"

"Well, that meant he had proposed. You know, Guy, I had told you he would: I saw it in his eye. So I observed, in a moment, he *had*, and I said, 'Yes.'"

"Then why doesn't she come down to dinner?"

"He has upset her. It is the old story: he cried to her, and told her he had been wild, and misconducted himself, all because he had never met a woman he could really love and respect; and then he begged her, and implored her, and said his fate depended on her."

"But she was not caught with that chaff; so why does she not come and receive the congratulations of the company on her escape?"

"Because she is far too delicate;" then, turning to her son, "and, perhaps, because she can't help comparing the manly warmth and loving appreciation of Mr. Richard Raby with the cold indifference and ingratitude of others."

"Oh," said Henry, colouring, "if that is her feeling, she will accept him next time."

"Next time!" roared Raby. "There shall be no next time. I have given the scamp fair play, quite against my own judgment. He has got his answer now, and I won't have the girl tormented with him any more. I trust that to you, Edith."

Mrs. Little promised him Dick and Jael should not meet again, in Raby Hall at least.

That evening she drew her son apart and made an earnest appeal to him.

"So much for her spite against you, Henry. You told her to decline

Richard Raby, and so she declined him. Spite, indeed! The gentle pique of a lovely, good girl, who knows her value, though she is too modest to show it openly. Well, Henry, you have lost her a husband, and she has given you one more proof of affection. Don't build the mountain of ingratitude any higher: do pray take the cure that offers, and make your mother happy, as well as yourself, my son." In this strain she continued, and used all her art, her influence, her affection, till at last, with a weary heart-broken sigh, he yielded as far as this; he said that, if it could once be made clear to him there was no hope of his ever marrying Grace Carden, he would wed Jael Dence at once.

Then he ordered his trap, and drove sullenly home, while Mrs. Little, full of delight, communicated her triumph to Jael Dence, and told her about the five thousand pounds, and was as enthusiastic in praise of Henry to Jael, as she had been of Jael to Henry.

Meantime he drove back to Hillsborough, more unhappy than ever, and bitter against himself for yielding, even so far, to gratitude and maternal influence.

It was late when he reached home: he let himself in with a latch-key, and went into his room for a moment.

A letter lay on the table, with no stamp on it: he took it up. It contained but one line; that line made his heart leap.

"News of G. C.

"Ransome."

CHAPTER XLIII.

Late as it was, Little went to the Town Hall directly. But there, to his bitter disappointment, he learned that Mr. Ransome had been called to Manchester by telegram. Little had nothing to do but to wait, and eat his heart with impatience. However, next day, towards afternoon, Ransome called on him at the works, in considerable excitement, and told him a new firm had rented large business premises in Manchester, obtained goods, insured them in the "Gosshawk," and then the premises had caught fire, and the goods been burnt to ashes: suspicions had been excited; Mr. Carden had gone to the spot, and telegraphed for him. He had met a London detective there, and, between them, they had soon discovered that full cases had come in by day, but full sacks gone out by night: the ashes also revealed no trace of certain goods the firm had insured. "And now comes the clue to it all. Amongst the few things that survived the fire was a photograph—of whom do you think? Shifty Dick. The dog had kept his word, and gone into trade."

"Confound him!" said Little: "he is always crossing my path, that fellow. You seem quite to forget that all this time I am in agonies of suspense. What do I care about Shifty Dick? He is nothing to me."

"Of course not. I am full of the fellow: a little more, and he'll

make a monomaniac of me. Mr. Carden offers 200*l.* for his capture; and we got an inkling he was coming this way again. There, there, I won't mention his name to you again. Let us talk of what *will* interest you. Well, sir, have you observed that you are followed and watched?"

"No."

"I am glad of it; then it has been done skilfully. You have been closely watched this month past by my orders."

This made young Little feel queer. Suppose he had attempted anything unlawful, his good friend here would have collared him.

"You'll wonder that a good citizen like you should be put under surveillance; but I thought it likely your advertisement would either make the lady write to you, or else draw her back to the town. She didn't write, so I had you watched, to see if anybody took a sly peep at you. Well, this went on for weeks, and nothing turned up. But the other night a young woman walked several times by your house, and went away with a sigh. She had a sort of Protestant nun's dress on, and a thick veil. Now you know Mr. Carden told you she was gone into a convent. I am almost sure it is the lady."

Little thanked him with all his soul, and then inquired eagerly where the nun lived.

"Ah, my man didn't know that. Unfortunately, he was on duty in the street, and had no authority to follow anybody. However, if you can keep yourself calm, and obey orders ——"

"I will do anything you tell me."

"Well, then, this evening, as soon as it is quite dark, you do what I have seen you do in happier times. Light your reading-lamp, and sit reading close to the window; only you must not pull down the blind. Lower the venetians, but don't turn them so as to hide your face from the outside. You must promise me faithfully not to move under any circumstances, or you would be sure to spoil all."

Little gave the promise, and performed it to the letter. He lighted his lamp, and tried to read book after book; but, of course, he was too agitated to fix his attention on them. He got all Grace's letters, and read them; and it was only by a stern effort he kept still at all.

The night wore on, and heart-sickness was beginning to succeed to feverish impatience, when there was a loud knock at the door. Little ran to it himself, and found a sergeant of police, who told him in a low voice he brought a message from the chief constable.

"I was to tell you it is all right; he is following the party himself. He will call on you at twelve to-morrow morning."

"Not before that?" said Little. However, he gave the sergeant a sovereign, for good news, and then, taking his hat, walked twenty miles out of Hillsborough, and back, for he knew it was useless his going to bed, or trying to settle to anything.

He got back at ten o'clock, washed, breakfasted, and dozed on two chairs, till Ransome came, with a carpet-bag in his hand.

"Tell me all about it: don't omit anything." This was Little's greeting.

"Well, sir, she passed the house about nine o'clock, walking quickly; and took just one glance in at your window, but did not stop. She came back in half an hour, and stood on the opposite side of the way, and then passed on. I hid in a court, where she couldn't see me. By and by she comes back, on your side the way this time, gliding like a cat, and she crouched and curled round the angle of the house, and took a good look at you. Then she went slowly away, and I passed her. She was crying bitterly, poor girl. I never lost sight of her, and she led me a dance, I can tell you. I'll take you to the place; but you had better let me disguise you; for I can see she is very timid, and would fly away in a moment, if she knew she was detected."

Little acquiesced, and Ransome disguised him in a beard, and a loose set of clothes, and a billy-cock hat, and said that would do, as long as he kept at a prudent distance from the lady's eye. They then took a cab and drove out of Hillsborough. When they had proceeded about two miles up the valley, Ransome stopped the cab, and directed the driver to wait for them.

He then walked on, and soon came to a row of houses, in two blocks of four houses each.

The last house of the first block had a bill in the window, "To be let furnished."

He then knocked at the door, and a woman in charge of the house opened it.

"I am the Chief Constable of Hillsborough: and this is my friend Mr. Park; he is looking out for a furnished house. Can he see this one?"

The woman said, "Certainly, gentlemen," and showed them over the house.

Ransome opened the second-story window, and looked out on the back garden.

"Ah," said he, "these houses have nice long gardens in the rear, where one can walk and be private."

He then nudged Henry, and asked the woman who lived in the first house of the next block; "the house that garden belongs to?"

"Why, the bill was in the window the other day; but it is just took. She is a kind of a nun, I suppose: keeps no servant; only a girl comes in and does for her, and goes home at night. I saw her yesterday, walking in the garden there. She seems rather young to be all alone like that; but perhaps there's some more of 'em coming. They sort o' cattle mostly goes in bands."

Henry asked what was the rent of the house. The woman did not know, but told him the proprietor lived a few doors off. "I shall take this house," said Little. "I think you are right," observed Ransome: "it will just answer your purpose." They went together, and took the

house directly; and Henry, by advice of Ransome, engaged a woman to come into the house in the morning, and go away at dusk. Ransome also advised him to make arrangements for watching Grace's garden unseen. "That will be a great comfort to you," said he: "I know by experience. Above all things," said this sagacious officer, "don't you let her know she is discovered. Remember this: when she wants you to know she is here, she'll be sure to let you know. At present she is here on the sly; so, if you thwart her, she'll be off again as sure as fate."

Little was forced to see the truth of this, and promised to restrain himself, hard as the task was. He took the house; and used to let himself into it with a latch-key at about ten o'clock every night.

There he used to stay and watch, till past noon: and nearly every day he was rewarded by seeing the Protestant nun walk in her garden.

He was restless and miserable, till she came out: when she appeared his heart bounded and thrilled; and when once he had feasted his eyes upon her, he would go about the vulgar affairs of life pretty contentedly.

By advice of Ransome, he used to sit in his other house from seven till nine, and read at the window, to afford his beloved a joy similar to that he stole himself.

And such is the power of true love that these furtive glances soothed two lives. Little's spirits revived, and some colour came back to Grace's cheek.

One night there was a house broken into in the row.

Instantly Little took the alarm, on Grace's account, and bought powder and bullets, and a double-barrelled rifle, and a revolver; and now, at the slightest sound, he would be out of bed in a moment, ready to defend her, if necessary.

Thus they both kept their hearts above water, and Grace visited the sick, and employed her days in charity; and then, for a reward, crept, with soft foot, to Henry's window, and devoured him with her eyes, and fed on that look for hours afterwards.

When this had gone on for nearly a month, Lally, who had orders to keep his eye on Mr. Little, happened to come by and see Grace looking in at him.

He watched her at a distance, but had not the intelligence to follow her home. He had no idea it was Grace Carden.

However, in his next letter to his master, who was then in London, he told him Little always read at night, by the window, and one night a kind of nun had come and taken a very long look at him, and gone away crying. "I suspect," said Lally, "she has played the fool with him some time or other, before she was a nun."

He was not a little surprised when his master telegraphed in reply that he would be down by the first train: but, the fact is, that Coventry had already called on Mr. Carden, and been told that his wife was in a convent, and he would never see her again. I must add that Mr. Carden received him as roughly as he had Little, but the interview terminated differently.

Coventry, with his winning tongue, and penitence, and plausibility, softened the indignant father, and then, appealing to his good sense, extorted from him the admission that his daughter's only chance of happiness lay in forgiving him, and allowing him to atone his faults by a long life of humble devotion. But when Coventry, presuming on this, implored him to reveal where she was, the old man stood staunch, and said that was told him under a solemn assurance of secrecy, and nothing should induce him to deceive his daughter. "I will not lose her love and confidence, for any of you," said he.

So now Coventry put that word "convent" and this word "nun" together, and came to Hillsborough full of suspicions.

He took lodgings nearly opposite Little's house, and watched, in a dark room, so persistently, that, at last, he saw the nun appear, saw her stealthy, cat-like approaches, her affected retreat, her cunning advance, her long lingering look.

A close observer of women, he saw in every movement of her supple body that she was animated by love.

He raged and sickened with jealousy, and when, at last, she retired, he followed her, with hell in his heart, and never lost sight of her till she entered her house in the valley.

If there had been a house to let in the terrace, he would certainly have taken it; but Little had anticipated him.

He took a very humble lodging in the neighbourhood; and, by dint of watching, he at last saw the nun speaking to a poor woman with her veil up. It revealed to him nothing but what he knew already. It was the woman he loved, and she hated him; the woman who had married him under a delusion, and stabbed him on his bridal day. He loved her all the more passionately for that.

Until he received Lally's note, he had been content to wait patiently until his rival should lose hope, and carry himself and his affections elsewhere; he felt sure that must be the end of it.

But now jealousy stung him wild, passion became too strong for reason, and he resolved to play a bold and lawless game, to possess his lawful wife. Should it fail, what could they do to him? A man may take his own by force. Not only his passions, but the circumstances tempted him. She was actually living alone, in a thinly-peopled district, and close to a road. It was only to cover her head, and stifle her cries, and fly with her to some place prepared beforehand, where she would be brought to submission by kindness of manner combined with firmness of purpose.

Coventry possessed every qualification to carry out such a scheme as this. He was not very courageous; yet he was not a coward; and no great courage was required. Cunning, forethought, and unscrupulousness were the principal things, and these he had to perfection.

He provided a place to keep her: it was a shooting-box of his own, on a heathery hill, that nobody visited except for shooting, and the season for shooting was passed.

He armed himself with false certificates of lunacy, to show on an emergency, and also a copy of his marriage certificate: he knew how unwilling strangers are to interfere between man and wife.

The only great difficulty was to get resolute men to help him in this act.

He sounded Cole; but that worthy objected to it, as being out of his line.

Coventry talked him over, and offered a sum that made him tremble with cupidity. He assented, on one condition, that he should not be expected to break into the house, nor do any act that could be "construed burglarious." He actually used that phrase, which I should hardly have expected from him.

Coventry assented to this condition. He undertook to get into the house, and open the door to Cole and his myrmidons: he stipulated, however, that Cole should make him a short iron ladder with four sharp prongs. By means of this he could enter Grace's house at a certain unguarded part, and then run down and unbar the front door. He had thoroughly reconnoitred the premises, and was sure of success.

First one day was appointed for the enterprise, then another, and, at last, it was their luck to settle on a certain night, of which I will only say at present, that it was a night Hillsborough and its suburbs will not soon forget.

Midnight was the hour agreed on.

Now at nine o'clock of this very night the chief constable of Hillsborough was drinking tea with Little scarcely twenty yards from the scene of the proposed abduction. Not that either he or Little had the least notion of the conspiracy. The fact is, Hillsborough had lately been deluged with false coin, neatly executed, and passed with great dexterity. The police had received many complaints, but had been unable to trace it. Lately, however, an old bachelor, living in this suburban valley, had complained to the police that his neighbours kept such enormous fires all night, as to make his wall red-hot and blister his paint.

This, and one or two other indications, made Ransome suspect the existence of a furnace, and he had got a search-warrant in his pocket, on which, however, he did not think it safe to act, till he had watched the suspected house late at night, and made certain observations for himself. So he had invited himself to tea with his friend Little—for he was sure of a hearty welcome at any hour—and, over their tea, he now told him his suspicions, and invited him to come and take a look at the suspected house with him.

Little consented. But there was no hurry: the later they went to the house in question the better. So they talked of other matters, and the conversation soon fell on that which was far more interesting to Little than the capture of all the coiners in creation.

He asked Ransome how long he was to go on like this, contenting himself with the mere sight of her.

"Why," said Ransome, "even that has made another man of you. Your eye is twice as bright as it was a month ago, and your colour is coming back. That is a wise proverb, 'Let well alone.' I hear she visits the sick, and some of them swear by her. I think I'd give her time to take root here; and then she will not be so ready to fly off in a tangent."

Little objected that it was more than flesh and blood could bear.

"Well, then," said Ransome, "promise me just one thing: that, if you speak to her, it shall be in Hillsborough, and not down here."

Little saw the wisdom of this, and consented, but said he was resolved to catch her at his own window the next time she came.

He was about to give his reasons, but they were interrupted by a man and horse clattering up to the door.

"That will be for me," said Ransome. "I thought I should not get leave to drink my tea in peace."

He was right; a mounted policeman brought him a note from the mayor telling him word had come into the town that there was something wrong with Ousely dam. He was to take the mayor's horse, and ride up at once to the reservoir, and, if there was any danger, to warn the valley.

"This looks serious," said Ransome. "I must wish you good-by."

"Take a piece of advice with you. I hear that dam is too full; if so, don't listen to advice from anybody, but open the sluices of the waste-pipes, and relieve the pressure; but if you find a flaw in the embankment, don't trifle, blow up the waste-weir at once with gunpowder. I wish I had a horse, I'd go with you. By the way, if there is the least danger of that dam bursting, of course you will give me warning in time, and I'll get her out of the house at once."

"What, do you think the water would get as far as this, to do any harm? It is six miles."

"It might. Look at the form of the ground; it is a regular trough from that dam to Hillsborough. My opinion is, it would sweep everything before it, and flood Hillsborough itself—the lower town. I shall not go to bed, old fellow, till you come back and tell me it is all right."

With this understanding Ransome galloped off. On his way he passed by the house where he suspected coining. The shutters were closed, but his experienced eye detected a bright light behind one of them, and a peculiar smoke from the chimney.

Adding this to his other evidence, he now felt sure the inmates were coiners, and he felt annoyed. "Fine I look," said he, "walking tamely past criminals at work, and going to a mayor's-nest six miles off."

However, he touched the horse with his heel, and cantered forward on his errand.

John Ransome rode up to the Ousely Reservoir, and down again, in less than an hour and a half; and every incident of those two rides is imprinted on his memory for life.

He first crossed the water at Poma bridge. The village of that name lay on his right, towards Hillsborough, and all the lights were out except in the two public-houses. One of these, "The Reindeer," was near the bridge, and from it a ruddy glare shot across the road, and some boon companions were singing, in very good harmony, a trite Scotch chorus,—

"We are no that fou, we are no that fou,
But just a drappie in our ee;
The cock may craw, the day may daw',
But still we'll taste the barley bree."

Ransome could hear the very words; he listened, laughed, and then rode up the valley till he got opposite a crinoline-wire factory called the "Kildare Wheel." Here he observed a single candle burning: a watcher, no doubt.

The next place he saw was also on the other side the stream: Dolman's farmhouse, the prettiest residence in the valley. It was built of stone, and beautifully situated on a promontory between two streams. It had a lawn in front, which went down to the very edge of the water, and was much admired for its close turf and flowers. The farm buildings lay behind the house.

There was no light whatever in Dolman's: but they were early people. The house and lawn slept peacefully in the night: the windows were now shining, now dark, for small fleecy clouds kept drifting at short intervals across the crescent moon.

Ransome pushed on across the open ground, and for a mile or two saw few signs of life, except here and there a flickering light in some water-wheel; for now one picturesque dam and wheel succeeded another as rapidly as Nature permitted; and indeed the size of these dams, now shining in the fitful moonlight, seemed remarkable, compared with the mere thread of water which fed them, and connected them together for miles like pearls on a silver string.

Ransome pushed rapidly on, up hill and down dale, till he reached the high hill, at whose foot lay the hamlet of Damflask, distant two miles from Ousely Reservoir.

He looked down and saw a few lights in this hamlet, some stationary, but two moving.

"Hum!" thought Ransome; "they don't seem to be quite so easy in their minds up here."

He dashed into the place and drew up at a house where several persons were collected.

As he came up, a singular group issued forth: a man, with a pig-whip, driving four children—the eldest not above seven years old—and carrying an infant in his arms. The little imps were clad in shoes, night-gowns, nightcaps, and a blanket apiece, and were shivering and whining at being turned out of bed into the night air.

Ransome asked the man what was the matter.

One of the bystanders laughed, and said, satirically, Ousely dam was to burst that night, so all the pigs and children were making for the hill.

The man himself, whose name was Joseph Galton, explained more fully.

"Sir," said he, "my wife is groaning, and I am bound to obey her. She had a dream last night she was in a flood, and had to cross a plank or summut. I quieted her till supper; but then landlord came round and warned us all of a crack or summut up at dam. And so now I am taking this little lot up to my brother's. It's the foolishest job I ever done: but needs must when the devil drives, and it is better so than to have my old gal sour her milk, and pine her suckling, and maybe fret herself to death into the bargain."

Ransome seized on the information, and rode on directly to the village inn. He called the landlord out, and asked him what he had been telling the villagers. Was there anything seriously amiss up at the reservoir?

"Nay, I hope not," said the man; "but we got a bit of a fright this afternoon: a young man rode through, going down to Hillsborough, and stopped here to have his girth mended; he had broke it coming down our hill. While he was taking a glass he let out his errand: they had found a crack in the embankment, and sent him down to Hillsborough to tell Mr. Tucker, the engineer. Bless your heart, we should never have known aught about it, if his girth hadn't broke." He added, as a reason for thinking it was not serious, that Mr. Tucker had himself inspected the dam just before tea-time, and hadn't even seen the crack. It was a labouring-man who had discovered it through crossing the embankment lower down than usual. "But you see, sir," said he, in conclusion, "we lie very low here, and right in the track; and so we mustn't make light of a warning. And, of course, many of the workmen stop here, and have their say; and, to tell you the truth, one or two of them have always misliked the foundation that embankment is built on: too many old landslips to be seen about. But, after all, I suppose they can empty the dam if need be; and, of course, they will, if there is any danger. I expect Mr. Tucker up every minute."

Ransome thanked him for his information and pushed on to Lower Hatfield: there he found lights in the houses and the inhabitants astir; but he passed through the village in silence and came to the great corn-mill, a massive stone structure with granite pillars, the pride of the place. The building was full of lights, and the cranes were all at work hoisting the sacks of flour from the lower floors to the top story. The faces of the men reflected in the flaring gas, and the black cranes with their gaunt arms, and the dark bodies rising by the snake-like cords, formed a curious picture in the fluctuating moonlight, and an interesting one too: for it showed the miller did not feel his flour quite safe.

The next place Ransome came to was Fox Farm.

Farmer Emden was standing at the door of his house, and, in reply to

Ransome, told him he had just come down from the reservoir. He had seen the crack and believed it to be a mere frost-crack. He apprehended no danger, and had sent his people to bed; however, he should sit up for an hour or two, just to hear what Tucker the engineer had to say about it; he had been sent for.

Ransome left him, and a smart canter brought him in sight of what seemed a long black hill, with great glow-worms dotted here and there.

That hill was the embankment, and the glow-worms were the lanterns of workmen examining the outer side of the embankment and prying into every part.

The enormous size and double slope of the bank, its apparent similarity in form and thickness to those natural barriers, with which nature hems in lakes of large dimensions, acted on Ransome's senses, and set him wondering at the timidity and credulity of the people in Hatfield and Damflask. This sentiment was uppermost in his mind when he rode up to the south side of the embankment.

He gave his horse to a boy and got upon the embankment and looked north.

The first glance at the water somewhat shook that impression of absolute security the outer side of the barrier had given him.

In nature a lake lies at the knees of the restraining hills, or else has a sufficient outlet.

But here was a lake nearly full to the brim on one side of the barrier and an open descent on the other.

He had encountered a little wind coming up, but not much; here, however, the place being entirely exposed, the wind was powerful and blew right down the valley, ruffling the artificial lake.

Altogether it was a solemn scene, and, even at first glance, one that could not be surveyed, after all those comments and reports, without some awe and anxiety. The surface of the lake shone like a mirror, and waves of some size dashed against the embankment with a louder roar than one would have thought possible, and tossed some spray clean over all; while, overhead, clouds, less fleecy now, and more dark and sullen, drifted so swiftly across the crescent moon that she seemed flying across the sky.

Having now realized that the embankment, huge as it was, was not so *high* by several hundred feet as nature builds in parallel cases, and that, besides the natural pressure of the whole water, the upper surface of the lake was being driven by the wind against the upper or thin part of the embankment, Ransome turned and went down the embankment to look at the crack and hear opinions.

There were several workmen, an intelligent farmer called Ives, and Mr. Mountain, one of the contractors who had built the dam, all examining the crack.

Mr. Mountain was remarking that the crack was perfectly dry, a plain proof there was no danger.

"Ay, but," said Ives, "it has got larger since tea-time; see, I can get my hand in now."

"Can you account for that?" asked Ransome of the contractor.

Mountain said it was caused by the embankment settling. "Everything settles down a little, houses and embankments and all. There's no danger, Mr. Ransome, believe me."

"Well, sir," said Ransome, "I am not a man of science, but I have got eyes and I see the water is very high, and driving against your weak part. Ah!" Then he remembered Little's advice. "Would you mind opening the sluice-pipes?"

"Not in the least, but I think it is the engineer's business to give an order of that kind."

"But he is not here, and professional etiquette must give way where property and lives, perhaps, are at stake. To tell you the truth, Mr. Mountain, I have got the advice of an abler man than Mr. Tucker. His word to me was, 'If the water is as high as they say, don't waste time, but open the sluices at once and relieve the dam.'"

The workmen, who had said scarcely a word till then, raised an assenting murmur at the voice of common sense.

Mountain admitted it could do no harm, and gave an order accordingly; screws were applied and the valves of the double set of sluice-pipes were forced open, but with infinite difficulty, owing to the tremendous pressure of the water.

This operation showed all concerned what a giant they were dealing with: while the sluices were being lifted, the noise and tremor of the pipes were beyond experience and conception. When, after vast efforts, they were at last got open, the ground trembled violently, and the water, as it rushed out of the pipes, roared like discharges of artillery. So hard is it to resist the mere effect of the senses, that nearly everybody ran back appalled, although the effect of all this roaring could only be to relieve the pressure: and, in fact, now that those sluices were opened the dam was safe, provided it could last a day or two.

Lights were seen approaching, and Mr. Tucker, the resident engineer, drove up: he had Mr. Carter, one of the contractors, in the gig with him.

He came on the embankment, and signified a cold approval of the sluices being opened.

Then Ransome sounded him about blowing up the waste-weir.

Tucker did not reply, but put some questions to a workman or two. Their answers showed that they considered the enlargement of the crack a fatal sign.

Upon this Mr. Tucker ordered them all to stand clear of the suspected part.

"Now, then," said he, "I built this embankment, and I'll tell you whether it is going to burst or not."

Then he took a lantern, and was going to inspect the crack himself;

but Mr. Carter, respecting his courage and coolness, would accompany him. They went to the crack, examined it carefully with their lanterns, and then crossed over to the waste-weir: no water was running into it in the ordinary way, which showed the dam was not full to its utmost capacity.

They returned, and consulted with Mountain.

Ransome put in his word, and, once more remembering Little's advice, begged them to blow up the waste-weir.

Tucker thought that was a stronger measure than the occasion required; there was no immediate danger: and the sluice-pipes would lower the water considerably in twenty-four hours.

Farmer Ives put in his word. "I can't learn from any of you that an enlarging crack in a new embankment is a common thing. I shall go home, but my boots won't come off this night."

Encouraged by this, Mr. Mountain, the contractor, spoke out.

"Mr. Tucker," said he, "don't deceive yourself; the sluice-pipes are too slow: if we don't relieve the dam, there'll be a blow up in half-an-hour; mark my words."

"Well," said Mr. Tucker, "no precaution has been neglected in building this dam; provision has been made even for blowing up the waste-weir: a hole has been built in the masonry, and there's dry powder and a fuse kept at the valve-house. I'll blow up the waste-weir, though I think it needless. I am convinced that crack is above the level of the water in the reservoir."

This observation struck Ransome, and he asked if it could not be ascertained by measurement.

"Of course it can," said Tucker: "and I'll measure it as I come back."

He then started for the weir and Carter accompanied him.

They crossed the embankment, and got to the weir.

Ives went home, and the workmen withdrew to the side, not knowing exactly what might be the effect of the explosion.

By and by, Ransome looked up, and observed a thin sheet of water beginning to stream over the centre of the embankment, and trickle down: the quantity was nothing; but it alarmed him. Having no special knowledge on these matters, he was driven to comparisons; and it flashed across him, that, when he was a boy, and used to make little mud-dams in April, they would resist the tiny stream until it trickled over them, and from that moment their fate was sealed. Nature, he had observed, operates alike in small things and great, and that sheet of water, though thin as a wafer, alarmed him.

He thought it was better to give a false warning than withhold a true one: he ran to his horse, jumped on him, and spurred away.

His horse was fast and powerful, and carried him in three minutes back to Emden's farm. The farmer had gone to bed. Ransome knocked him up, and told him he feared the dam was going; then galloped on to

Hatfield Mill. Here he found the miller and his family all gathered outside, ready for a start; one workman had run down from the reservoir.

"The embankment is not safe."

"So I hear. I'll take care of my flour, and my folk. The mill will take care of herself." And he pointed with pride to the solid structure and granite pillars.

Ransome galloped on, shouting as he went.

The shout was taken up a-head, and he heard a voice crying in the night, "IT'S COMING! IT'S COMING!" This weird cry, which, perhaps, his own galloping and shouting had excited, seemed like an independent warning, and thrilled him to the bone. He galloped through Hatfield, shouting "Save yourselves! Save yourselves!" and the people poured out, and ran for high ground, shrieking wildly; looking back he saw the hill dotted with what he took for sheep at first; but it was the folk in their night-clothes.

He galloped on to Damflask, still shouting as he went.

At the edge of the hamlet, he found a cottage with no light in it; he dismounted and thundered at the door. "Escape for your lives! for your lives!"

A man, called Hillsbro' Harry, opened the window.

"The embankment is going. Fly for your lives!"

"Nay," said the man, coolly, "Ousely dam will brust noane this week," and turned to go to bed again.

He found Joseph Galton and another man carrying Mrs. Galton and her new-born child away in a blanket. This poor woman, who had sent her five children away on the faith of a dream, was now objecting, in a faint voice, to be saved herself from evident danger. "Oh dear, dear! you might as well let me go down with the flood as kill me with taking me away."

Such was the sapient discourse of Mrs. Galton, who, half an hour ago, had been supernaturally wise and prudent. Go to, wise mother and silly woman, men will love thee none the less for the inequalities of thine intellect; and honest Joe will save thy life, and heed thy twaddle no more than the bleating of a lamb.

Ransome had not left the Galtons many yards behind him, when there was a sharp explosion heard up in the hills.

Ransome pulled up and said aloud, "It will be all right now, thank goodness! they have blown up the weir."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when he heard a loud sullen roar, speedily followed by a tremendous hiss, and a rumbling thunder, that shook the very earth where he stood, two miles distant.

This is what had taken place since he left the reservoir but ten minutes ago.

Mr. Tucker and Mr. Carter laid the gunpowder and the train, and lighted the latter, and came back across the middle of the embankment.

Being quite safe here from the effect of the explosion, Mr. Tucker was

desirous to establish by measurement that the water in the reservoir had not risen so high as the crack in the embankment.

With this view he took out a measure, and, at some risk of being swept into eternity, began coolly to measure the crack downwards.

At this very time water was trickling over; and that alarmed Carter, and he told Tucker they were trifling with their own lives.

"Oh," said Tucker, "that is only the spray from the waves."

They actually measured the crack, stooping over it with their lanterns.

When they had done that, Carter raised his head, and suddenly clutched Tucker by the arm, and pointed upwards. The water was pouring over the top, still in a thin sheet, but then that sheet was gradually widening. The water came down to their feet, and some of it disappeared in the crack; and the crack itself looked a little larger than when last inspected. Tucker said, gravely, "I don't like that: but let me examine the valve-house at once." He got down to the valve-house, but before he could ascertain what quantity of water was escaping, Carter called to him, "Come out, for God's sake, or you are lost!"

He came running out, and saw an opening thirty feet wide and nearly a foot deep, and a powerful stream rushing over it.

The moment Tucker saw that, he cried, "It's all up, the embankment must go!" And, the feeling of the architect overpowering the instincts of the man, he stood aghast. But Carter laid hold of him, and dragged him away.

Then he came to himself, and they ran across the embankment.

As they started, the powder, which had hung fire unaccountably, went off, and blew up the waste-weir: but they scarcely heard it; for, as they ran, the rent above kept enlarging and deepening at a fearful rate, and the furious stream kept rushing past their flying heels, and threatened to sweep them sideways to destruction.

They were safe at last; but even as they stood panting, the rent in the top of the embankment spread — deepened — yawned terrifically — and the pent-up lake plunged through, and sweeping away at once the centre of the embankment, rushed, roaring and hissing, down the valley, an avalanche of water, whirling great trees up by the roots, and sweeping huge rocks away, and driving them, like corks, for miles.

At that appalling sound, that hissing thunder, the like of which he had never heard before, and hopes never to hear again, Ransome spurred away at all his speed, and warned the rest of the village with loud inarticulate cries; he could not wait to speak, nor was it necessary.

At the top of the hill he turned a moment, and looked up the valley: soon he saw a lofty white wall running down on Hatfield Mill: it struck the mill, and left nothing visible but the roof, surrounded by white foam.

Another moment, and he distinctly saw the mill swim a yard or two, then disappear, and leave no trace, and on came the white wall, hissing and thundering.

Ransome uttered a cry of horror, and galloped madly forward, to save what lives he might.

Whenever he passed a house he shrieked his warning, but he never drew rein.

As he galloped along his mind worked. He observed the valley widen in places, and he hoped the flying lake would spread, and so lose some of that tremendous volume and force before which he had seen Hatfield stone mill go down.

With this hope he galloped on, and reached Poma Bridge, five miles and a half from the reservoir.

Here, to his dismay, he heard the hissing thunder sound as near to him as it was when he halted on the hill above Damflask: but he could see nothing, owing to a turn in the valley.

At the bridge itself, he found a man standing, without his hat, staring wildly up the valley.

He yelled to this man, "Dam is burst. Warn the village—for their lives—run on to Hillsborough—when you are winded, send another on. You'll all be paid at the Town Hall."

Then he dashed across the bridge.

As he crossed it, he caught sight of the flying lake once more: he had gone over more ground, but he had gone no farther. He saw the white wall strike Dolman's farm; there was a light in one window now. He saw the farmhouse, with its one light, swim bodily, then melt and disappear, with all the poor souls in it.

He galloped on; his hat flew off: he came under the coiners' house, and yelled a warning. A window was opened, and a man looked out; the light was behind him, and, even in that terrible moment, he recognized—Shifty Dick.

"The flood! the flood! Fly! Get on high ground, for your lives!"

He galloped furiously, and made for Little's house.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Little took a book, and tried to while away the time till Ransome's return; but he could not command his attention. The conversation about Grace had excited a topic which excluded every other.

He opened his window, a French casement, and looked out upon the night.

Then he observed that Grace, too, was keeping vigil; for a faint light shot from her window, and sparkled on the branches of the plane-tree in her little front garden.

"And that," thought Henry, sadly, "is all I can see of her. Close to her, yet far off,—farther than ever now."

A deep sadness fell on him, sadness and doubt. Suppose he were to

lay a trap for her to-morrow, and catch her at her own door! What good would it do? He put himself in her place. That process showed him at once she would come no more. He should destroy her little bit of patient, quiet happiness, the one daily sunbeam of her desolate life.

By-and-by, feeling rather drowsy, he lay down in his clothes to wait for Ransome's return. He put out his light.

From his bed he could see Grace's light kiss the plane-tree.

He lay, and fixed his eyes on it, and thought of all that had passed between them; and, by-and-by, love and grief made his eyes misty, and that pale light seemed to dance and flicker before him.

About midnight, he was nearly dozing off, when his ear caught a muttering outside; he listened, and thought he heard some instrument grating below.

He rose very softly, and crept to the window, and looked keenly through his casement.

He saw nothing at first; but presently a dark object emerged from behind the plane-tree I have mentioned, and began to go slowly, but surely, up it.

Little feared it was a burglar, about to attack that house which held his darling.

He stepped softly to his rifle, and loaded both barrels. It was a breech-loader. Then he crawled softly to the window, and peered out, rifle in hand.

The man had climbed the tree, and was looking earnestly in at one of the windows in Grace's house. His attention was so fixed that he never saw the gleaming eye which now watched him.

Presently the drifting clouds left the moon clear a minute, and Henry Little recognized the face of Frederick Coventry.

He looked at him, and began to tremble.

Why did he tremble? Because—after the first rush of surprise—rage, hate, and bloody thoughts crossed his mind. Here was his enemy, the barrier to his happiness, come, of his own accord, to court his death. Why not take him for a burglar, and shoot him dead? Such an act might be blamed, but it could not be punished severely.

The temptation was so great, that the rifle shook in his hands, and a cold perspiration poured down his back.

He prayed to God in agony to relieve him from this temptation; he felt that it was more than he could bear.

He looked up. Coventry was drawing up a short iron ladder from below. He then got hold of it, and fixed it on the sill of Grace's window.

Little burst his own window open. "You villain!" he cried, and levelled his rifle at him.

Coventry uttered a yell of dismay. Grace opened her window, and looked out, with a face full of terror.

At sight of her, Coventry cried to her in abject terror, "Mercy! mercy! Don't let him shoot me."

Grace looked round, and saw Henry aiming at Coventry.

She screamed, and Little lowered the rifle directly.

Coventry crouched directly in the fork of the tree.

Grace looked bewildered from one to the other; but it was to Henry she spoke, and asked him in trembling tones what it "all meant."

But, ere either could make a reply, a dire sound was heard of hissing thunder: so appalling that the three actors in this strange scene were all frozen and rooted where they stood.

Then came a fierce galloping, and Ransome, with his black hair and beard flying, and his face like a ghost, reined up, and shouted wildly, "Dam burst! Coming down here! Fly for your lives! Fly!"

He turned, and galloped up the hill.

Cole and his mate emerged, and followed him, howling; but before the other poor creatures, half paralyzed, could do anything, the hissing thunder was upon them. What seemed a mountain of snow came rolling, and burst on them with terrific violence, whirling great trees and fragments of houses past with incredible velocity.

At the first blow, the house that stood nearest to the flying lake was shattered; and went to pieces soon after: all the houses quivered as the water rushed round them two stories high.

Little never expected to live another minute; yet, in that awful moment, his love stood firm. He screamed to Grace, "The houses must go!—the tree!—the tree!—get to the tree!"

But Grace, so weak at times, was more than mortal strong at that dread hour.

"What, live with him," she cried, "when I can die with you!"

She folded her arms, and her pale face was radiant—no hope, no fear.

Now came a higher wave, and the water reached above the window-sills of the bedroom floor, and swept away the ladder; yet, driven forward like a cannon-bullet, did not yet pour into the bedrooms from the main stream: but by degrees the furious flood broke, melted, and swept away the intervening houses, and then hacked off the gable-end of Grace's house, as if Leviathan had bitten a piece out. Through that aperture the flood came straight in, levelled the partitions at a blow, rushed into the upper rooms with fearful roar, and then, rushing out again to rejoin the greater body of water, blew the front wall clean away, and swept Grace out into the raging current.

The water pouring out of the house carried her, at first, towards the tree, and Little cried wildly to Coventry to save her. He awoke from his stupor of horror, and made an attempt to clutch her; but then the main force of the mighty water drove her away from him towards the house; her helpless body was whirled round and round three times by the struggling eddies, then hurried away like a feather by the overwhelming torrent.

The Lions of Catalonia — Monserrat.

I PARTED with the faithful reader last autumn,* in the wild little ravine dotted with a few olive and carob trees, which is spanned by that Roman aqueduct so dear to all lovers of old Tarragona. Let me rejoin him on the road back to the city, and which connects it with Lerida, the railway communication between them being still imperfect. As we roll along, with some dignity, in what I fear is the only carriage (the *tartana* does not suit my constitution) to be hired in the city of the Scipios, we naturally observe the character of the traffic. We meet waggons drawn by strings of over-worked horses (your Spaniard always overloads his beast, and invariably, by the way, gallops up hill), waggons with ponderous casks of wine—in Catalan *vi*, which the people pronounce *bi*. The sight reminds me that some of these days our province will be better known than it is as a producer of wine. In the district of which Tarragona is the commercial centre, there is an excellent red wine called priorato, which, I fancy, never reaches England except doctored and disguised into "port." Now, port is a very good thing, and priorato is a very good thing; but if the latter could be sold cheap, in a more natural form in England, its own merits would save it from the necessity of borrowing a Portuguese name. It would probably never rank with port, although the wines of Catalonia have not yet had the degree of skill brought to bear on them which enables one to decide of what they are capable. But suppose it never did, what then? It would still be an honest drinkable wine, doing its duty in that station to which it had been called. So, too, with other species. There is a white wine grown to the eastward of Barcelona, called alella, of which not one man in a thousand has ever heard, but which, when at its best, has a character entitling it to compete with sherry. Why do we adhere to a few historic liquors with a tenacity that makes us suffer misery when we find ourselves in regions where they do not happen to be in use? The Catalans, for instance, do not drink sherry, and it is as dear in Barcelona as in London. An Englishman has to educate himself afresh, before he can relish wines which Martial sent to his friends, with an epigram for the label of the jar. But,

> Quo me, Bacche, rapis tui
> Plenum?

Our destination is Tarragona, on our way to Monserrat, and if we went into the whole wine question of Cataluña, we should require the whole paper for our purpose. Arrived at Tarragona, however, I need not hurry my tourist away. I have endeavoured, indeed, to give him a

* *Cornhill Magazine*, No. 117, September, 1869.

sketch of its classical character; and he will be glad to hear that its museum is recovering from the dismal catastrophe recorded in my last essay. Whether the chief of that institution has yet recovered (in another sense) the modest *sueldo*, or salary, of which the revolution deprived him, I cannot say. But the museum is almost itself again. And venturing now to touch, before leaving, some more modern points of Tarraconese interest, let me add that there is a room there devoted to mediæval ruins. We Protestants have had many a hard saying flung at us for our destruction of what was beautiful in Catholic antiquity. But, here in Spain, the most intensely Romanist part of Europe, we are able to show our visitors traces of a devastation as savage as ever fell upon Perth or St. Andrew's. And it took place, here, long after we had begun in the North of Europe to cherish tenderly the ruins of the old days. So, in the museum of Tarragona, there exist, in many forms of disfigurement, large pieces of the monuments of the Kings of Arragon, and other potentates, saved from the wreck made of the Monastery of Poblet by Spanish revolutionists in 1835. Here you may see the sword of, perhaps, the greatest and most interesting of those kings,—James I., the Conqueror, the great "Jacme," the "Conquistador,"—who, in the thirteenth century, governed Catalonia and Arragon with admirable vigour; and added to them the Balearic Islands and Valencia. When Poblet was sacked and burnt in the year above mentioned, the bones of King Jacme, or *Jaume*, as he is called in Catalan, were saved and brought to Tarragona, where they lie in the handsome marble sarcophagus which is one of the first things that seizes your attention as you enter the Cathedral. In our last ramble through the ancient city, we were, perhaps, a little too exclusively employed upon its classical memories,—an excusable pre-occupation, since no other town in Spain has such a chain of them—though in the magnitude of the Roman remains existing, Tarragona, I admit, may be surpassed. Let me then counsel the stranger to examine attentively, *con detention*, certain details of the Cathedral which I could not touch upon in sketching its general character,—especially the exquisite marble and ivory carving of the *retablo* near the altar, and the exquisite wood carving of the stalls in the choir. Public spirit is not the strong point of the Spanish character. But the Cathedral of Tarragona has been fortunate in its archbishops, who have done much for its decoration. A chapel near the entry to the cloisters preserves the memory of one of the most distinguished of them, Archbishop Augustin, an early student of inscriptions and coins. Unfortunately, the scholarly spirit,—the truest antidote to fanaticism—did not continue to live among the Spanish clergy, who cherished the fanatical spirit instead;—"possessed" by which, they now, like the possessed in the Gospel, haunt mournfully the tombs of dead beliefs.

Not far from the Cathedral are to be found some very complete examples of Byzantine ecclesiastical architecture. All schools, faiths, and styles, indeed, have taken their turn, and left their trace, in this

delightful "old curiosity shop" (with reverence be it spoken) of the Mediterranean. And as the ancient part of it seems to have lived till now, so the modern part of it has an antique look. What a queer old street, for instance, is that *Calle de los Caballeros*, — "Gentlemen Street," as we might say in England,—so called, because it was the favourite residence of the nobles of the province! The vaulted hall of the house you pass stands open; and if you cross the threshold, and take a modest peep up the staircase, you will probably see a fragment of old Roman bas-relief let into the wall. There is little fear of your disturbing anybody, since, for all practical and social purposes now-a-days, the nobility of Catalonia, like that of other provinces of Spain, seems to be extinct. They never lived on their lands in the English fashion, but in towns like our Tarragona, and Vich, and others; and they still possess considerable estates, without exercising, as far as I am able to see, any practical influence over the country. The Liberals suppressed the *Seminarios Nobiles*, at which they used to be educated some thirty or forty years ago, and where they occasionally got a tincture of polite letters from the Jesuits. What sort of education they have had since, I am unable to learn, but conjecture that it must be about as good as none at all, for I hear of them, only, as damaging their estates by gambling; idling when they are not doing worse; and flying to Paris as soon as their unfortunate country is threatened with any political convulsion.

The every-day Tarragona of the actual hour,—the living Tarragona, I mean,—is pretty well the same sort of thing as any other third or fourth-rate Spanish town. There is the usual dirty café, with its constant smoking and spitting, where everybody in the place is to be found at one hour or another; and where the Spanish young man, if he is not taking his coffee, chocolate, or glass of hot milk, can call for his "*sarsa*," or tumbler of sarsaparilla ("A go of sarsaparilla" sounds a strange order to a London man!) There is the usual theatre of respectable size, with its faded actresses playing French burlesque, and an audience that nothing rouses to animation, except the *can-can*. The popularity of that miserable jingle, with its accompanying obscene dance, is wonderful. Upon the whole, it beats that of the revolutionary "Hymn of Riego." There is also a summer-garden, with another theatre in it, for the same kind of dramatic amusement,—the social life, in fact, alternating between intense dulness and a low kind of excitement. There is no reading, no dinner-giving, no sort of public sports, no trace of any kind of cultivated amusement; you cannot even buy photographs of the buildings which you have enjoyed so much. On asking for these, I was told that "an Englishman" passing through Tarragona had taken some, and that copies would be sent out for sale. I found, afterwards, that the same gentleman had been in Barcelona, and had been refused admittance into the only house from which a very picturesque old bit of the "Audiencia" could be conveniently taken. All the quasi-intellectual stir of the revolution in Spain is on the surface, and is a ripple caused by winds

blowing across the Pyrenees. The national life below is profoundly ignorant and incurious; nay, worse than that, is apt, when roused, to break out as savagery. Last September gave us terrible proof of this in Tarragona itself. A Republican general was entering the town amidst the welcomes of his admirers, when the unfortunate secretary of the civil governor advanced to his carriage to remonstrate with him. In an instant the secretary was stabbed and knocked down. He was then dragged by the heels as the bull is dragged out of the bull-ring. He lay for more than an hour in a wine-shop, at the mercy of every dastardly brute in the rabble, till he was again dragged down one of the steep streets leading to the harbour, and breathed his last on the margin of the sea. This crime was the immediate cause—as far as Catalonia was concerned—of the Republican rising, of which my reader must have heard so much last autumn. For the disarmament of Volunteers of Liberty which followed provoked the Republicans into trying resistance by force, in which they failed signally, after having, at one place in the part of Catalonia with which we are now occupied,—I mean Valls,—murdered, plundered, and outraged, after a fashion now happily exploded in other parts of Europe.

When that charming writer, Henri Beyle ("De Stendhal"), was consul at Civita Vecchia, he explained, in part, the horrible ennui from which he suffered, by saying that there was no life to interest one except that of the convicts—and that it was impossible to make a society out of them. The traveller curious about modern Tarragona will find there a Spanish prison of the true Spanish type; and Spanish prisons, hospitals, and asylums stand alone by themselves in the nineteenth century. As he strolls in the morning on the rampart walk at the northern end of the Rambla,—behind him, the black mass of the Castle of Pilate, the Palace of Augustus; before and below him, the sweep of hilly coast and the spirit-soothing ever classical sea,—his eye will be caught by a curious group of buildings far beneath. Their site is that of the ancient amphitheatre, which could be seen from the prætor's windows, and which is now traversed by the single line of rail of the Barcelona railway. A court-yard with white walls lies open to his view, in which he can discern gray figures moving like rats. Studying the surroundings, while still ignorant of the character of this dwelling, he will observe stone sentry-stations planted about, each occupied by a soldier with a musket. The whole story suddenly tells itself,—it is a prison that he is looking at. And this is the fact. The Palace itself is a house of detention, as we should say; but the building below is a regular prison for convicts of the worst class and heaviest sentences, natives not of Catalonia only, but of different other regions. During one of my visits to Tarragona, my companion, an accomplished English clergyman, well acquainted with the prison system of England, desired to have a look at this Spanish gaol, and we proceeded to apply to the authorities accordingly. We brought an official letter in due course to the governor of the institution, and his reception of us

dwells in my memory as a pleasant quaint specimen of the old Castilian courtesy. The Catalan is a formal man, too; but the Catalan is *bourgeois* compared with the stately Castilian, or the genial Andaluz. The moment our governor of the prison appeared I knew that he was not a *hijo de Cataluña*, a son of Catalonia, but from some still sunnier part of Spain.

We had evidently broken in, though it was well on in the afternoon, upon an hour of retirement (life goes wonderfully easily along with Spanish officials), for the governor came out to see us in a Greek cap and slippers. He was a little man with very dark eyes, and his salutation was of oriental politeness. He bowed us into his office, bowed again, and handed us cigarettes. Returning his courtesy, I asked, in my best Castilian (for he spoke no French), whether he had read the letter which we had had the honour to bring to him? "No," said he, "when distinguished and known persons like your worships are good enough to visit my prison, no introduction is necessary!" This was becoming baronial; so the Rev. Mr. B——, vicar of S——, and myself, felt that we should see everything to the best advantage. And certainly everything was laid open before us with the utmost frankness. We began with the sick-rooms and kitchen. The beds were fairly clean; the stuff being cooked seemed to consist principally of beans and grease. Then we had a walk to the prison proper: the sentries saluted, the gates opened, and we found ourselves in the yard which I had so often contemplated from the heights above. At once we were in a prison world the very antithesis of the prison world of Pentonville or Millbank. All was "free and easy" and barbarous—a sort of homely criminal existence, less like a "Model Prison" than like the Whitecross Street of thirty years ago, *plus* iron chains. Every convict had an iron chain down one leg, no doubt; but he was walking freely backwards and forwards with his chum; he was smoking; nobody was attempting to civilize or improve him; and he did not look unhappy. There were some very choice ruffians in the crowd; for the sun ripens ruffians like other things—swarthy fellows, with black eyes glancing like the daggers they so well know how to use. They were from different regions, the governor said—Cataluña, the Castiles, Valencia, La Mancha. "Perhaps some of them descended from the galley-slaves that Don Quixote liberated?" said I. "*Si!*" the governor answered, laughing, and his face lighted up. A Spaniard is always pleased when a foreigner mentions Don Quixote. The Indies are gone from his country; the gold is gone; the European position is gone: but the Don is still here; and even when a Spaniard does not read him, he knows well what his fame is.

My friend ventured to ask whether it was not dangerous to allow such free communication between the convicts? Might they not form plots together?

Our governor turned round sharply, and lowering his voice with a face full of meaning, said, "None of them could plot anything which I should not hear within an hour!"

But by way of lightening any gloomy impressions we might be feeling, and perhaps of showing the *Ingleses* that his gaol was not without its civilizing elements, the governor startled us at this point by calling for "music." We had gone inside one of the buildings,—part of a former convent,—and were in the gallery, when a rattling of chains up the centre of the hall announced the coming of the "band." They had a set of wind-instruments, and they went at their work with a will. "Play *Riego*," called out the governor—himself a child of the last revolution, and an old sufferer in the cause of Liberalism. Forthwith, the *Hymn of Liberty* began, —each player's chains giving a faint accompaniment if he happened, in his enthusiasm, to shake his leg. The whole scene was one of the wildest humour. I buried my face between my hands, and laughed till I cried.

We inspected the washing arrangements, which were terribly imperfect; and the sleeping-galleries, which were far too narrow and close. The mere thought of what those galleries must be about two o'clock on a Mediterranean summer morning was enough to make soul and body sick. We also saw the neat little chapel; and the black-holes, or *calabozos*, for the refractory,—very dismal dens. Before we left, some of the convicts were allowed to offer us for sale cigar-cases, knitted stockings, and other little articles of the kind. The governor was friendly and attentive to the moment of parting, and perfectly communicative; and we left grateful to him for his cordial politeness.

I have added these sketches of modern Tarragona to what I said before, of the antiquarian aspect of the city, in hopes that the reader will thus have one of our principal Lions of Catalonia before him with a certain completeness. Unlike Barcelona, Tarragona is not a manufacturing place. It is only important now as the seat of the export trade in wine and fruit, with some oil from the district of Urgel. A better harbour would be a great boon to Tarragona, which, according to Strabo, was ἄλιμος (harbourless) even in its great days. The completion of the railway communication with Lerida would also be a great advantage to Tarragona; while, like every other town in the province, she feels the inconvenience of that unfortunate gap to the eastward of Gerona, which still, in 1870, leaves unconnected Spain and France.

But the central point of interest in this portion of my series is to be the famous monastic mountain,—the Athos, or Carmel of Catalonia,—Monserrat,—a shrine of Our Lady for a thousand years. To reach it comfortably, we return by rail to Barcelona. Five minutes after we leave Tarraco we pass, on our left, the brown old Roman tomb already described; and by keeping a sharp look-out just beyond Altafulla, may get a glimpse of the noble Roman arch erected to the memory of Sergius Sura, the friend of Trajan and the younger Pliny. At Vendrell, a different kind of interest awaits us. "The women here," said the little guard of the train to us, last time I came this way, "are the handsomest in Cataluña; *tipos graciosos, si señor!*" added the small but gallant official, waving his pipe. He referred, doubtless, to an interesting class of face with Moorish-

looking eyes, which is found along the lines of defences,—such as the watersheds of rivers,—from which the Moors were gradually driven in the old days. The Catalan women, however, are not thought beautiful in Spain, where the Valencians and Andalusians bear away the palm; though they have often nice eyes, according to my humble judgment, and look picturesque enough with those kerchiefs on their heads, which bear a certain resemblance to the *mitræ* of the ancients. (The Sappho at p. 83 of King and Munro's charming *Horace* gives a fair notion of the effect of the Catalan kerchiefs.) Passing these sirens with the constancy of Ulysses and his crew, we have, for a long time, Monserrat in sight on our left. Seen from a distance, it forms a zigzag line,—like that made by forked lightning,—across the sky; and whether seen from land or sea, the first impression it makes gives the key to its character: the impression, I mean, of isolation. It seems to have nothing in common with the ridges of brown hills, the broken red-coloured valleys, of its part of the province; but asserts, as it were, a distinct individualism in keeping with its peculiar history.

In the days of Mr. Ford, author of the famous *Handboo kof Spain*, it was usual to ascend Monserrat from Colbato, on the southern side, which can be reached now by the line on which we have been travelling. But since those days, the Saragossa Railway Company have made a carriage-road along the ribs of the mountain on the side opposite to that just mentioned, and both time and trouble are saved by adopting the Saragossa Railway route. Unluckily there are only two passenger-trains a day, and the first of these starts at half-past six in the morning. The mists are still clinging about the vine-stumps as we roll ourselves clear of the north-eastern suburbs of Barcelona, and glide into a hilly country. We pass Sabadell, a manufacturing town of some consequence,—remarkable for having kept out the Republican rioters and declined to allow itself to be robbed, last September. We pass Terrassa, the *Egara* of the Romans, where one or two inscriptions have been found. We have a three-hours' journey in all till the mountain, with its broken line of bare grey peaks, rises grandly on our left, and we stop at the station of "Monistrol." A diligence is in waiting to take us, first to Monistrol itself, and then slowly, by a winding road,—on which the diligence makes tacks like a ship beating to windward,—away up the side of the holy mountain, to the monastery which nestles in a corner of it, some three-fourths of the way up.

Monistrol—*Monasteriolum* of old—lies in a valley at the foot of Monserrat, upon the River Llobregat, the *Rubricatum* of Pliny. The descent to it from the station, with the village and river below, and the mountain towering above, close to, is inspiriting and exhilarating, after the dull slow Spanish train. The driver shouts, the bells jingle, the old rattle-trap of a vehicle goes merrily along, past olive-trees, and huge reed-plants, and cuttings through red sandstone alternating with layers of limestone. As we approach the village and bridge, we may remark a factory worked by water dammed off the Llobregat. Water-power is

considerably used, in this way, by the factories of Catalonia, and when a dry summer comes, such factories get into hard straits. Rattling across the bridge, the diligence stops at the inn, or *fonda*, where you are expected to breakfast before the ascent is commenced. A wise man will always eat when there is a chance in Spain, for he does not know what he will find at his next quarters. Besides, by this time you have been four hours out of your house; and the sun has come up from the Mediterranean, and is filling the valley with a light that, even in the depths of winter, feeds roses. The chances are that you are as hungry as—what shall I say?—well, as a British seaman in Barcelona Hospital, with his sop of bread-and-water at half-past six; his four ounces of bread, one and a half ounces of meat, and half a glass of wine at ten; and the same meal repeated at five!

A country inn in Catalonia is a tolerably large, rambling, dirty place, with queer rough frescoes on the walls of the sitting-room. If you can keep clear of garlic you may fare tolerably; and fowl with rice (*pollo con arroz*), seasoned with a dash of saffron, ought to be secured, if possible. The wine will be better than the *vin ordinaire* of the cities, inasmuch as it is not nearly so likely to be polluted with alcohol. At Monistrol you will have no reason to complain, but will mount your diligence light of heart. Now begins the zigzag road along the mountain side; and a well-made, creditable road it is. First, we rise over the housetops of Monistrol,—over houses of many stories, with arcades at one side, and tiles of various colours. The vegetation of Monserrat soon begins to delight by its copiousness. As early as February the almond-blossoms will be out, and the spring air is cheered by the bloom of many a fruit-tree. There is plenty of laurustinus and blue hepatica, of narcissus, geraniums, and scores of other plants. The mulberry and the tobacco-plant, the myrtle and the pine, thrive equally well, and suggest impartially their discordant associations, on these favoured slopes. The floral opulence of Monserrat is one of its most extraordinary characteristics, and is explained by the monks in their own way, after a fashion more sentimental than scientific. "Who can wonder at it," they ask, "considering that Mary is the gardener?"—

> Que aqui, como es Maria la Hortelana,
> Medran las plantas sin industria humana.

¶ Meanwhile, other picturesque delights, as we mount, are enormous blocks of stone—huge balls of conglomerate—which seem to hang over the ridges beneath which we pass along our winding way. And gradually the landscape below unrolls itself—an undulating orange-tawny-coloured country, spotted with olive-trees, which, in the distance, look no bigger than shrubs; a country with a white village here and there, but generally of empty and silent appearance, intersected by the old Rubricatum, which twists itself ingeniously through the land, and has affected the face of the landscape. At last we reach (so to speak) the highest layer of road, and find ourselves under the stone peaks that we have seen from far-away. Their shape is not unlike that of stalactites; they are, indeed, a kind of

immense stalactites standing upright,—pointed pillars of conglomerate, formed ages ago by the sea, before the Mediterranean had fallen within its present limits, or the Pyrenees had assumed their present shape.

When the diligence reaches the last portion of the upper line of road we wind up with a smart gallop, turn a corner, and run into the broad plateau on which stands the pile of buildings, comprising the monastery, the chapel, and the various places of lodging for pilgrims of the Old World, and tourists of the New. This transition from the epoch of pilgrims to the epoch of tourists is going on all over the world, and in Monserrat we see the process with a curious distinctness. Thus, we find, on passing the chief gate, a group of wretched little houses for poor pilgrims,—wretched as Spanish provisions for the poor usually are. But not far off stands a respectable restaurant where French wines and English beer may be had, and where the dinners are nearly as good as those of the Barcelona hotels. So, too, new *aposentos*, or quarters for lodging, have been built, where there are clean rooms and decent beds. The theory is that no charge is made, but you may give what you like, and of course, you give rather more than you would at an equally comfortable country inn. There is still a small staff of monks, about a dozen, who perform services in the chapel, and the old place is still crowded by Catalan worshippers on particular days of the year. But Nature is recovering her rights over the mountain, once given up wholly to Tradition. Its interest was once theological; it is now geological. And the abbots and hermits fade from the traveller's memory while he strolls among the buildings, and looks up at the overhanging rounded pinnacles of stone formed and shaped in primæval seas. The geologists, I may here state, —repeating their *dicta* without presuming to criticise them,—describe Monserrat as "a mountain of denudation," and date it from the beginning of the secondary period. It is arranged in alternate strata of new red sandstone and pebbles of ancient rocks.

The monastery and other buildings stand, I have said, on a plateau on the eastern side of the mountain, with the white stone pinnacles above them, and a vast group of hills and rocks around. By passing through the oldest part of them you reach a curious garden facing the north, the wall of which was once decorated with a complete set (if the phrase be admitted) of the Apostles,—now unfortunately reduced to two or three grotesque figures of a sombre brown. From this antique garden the eye wanders over a vast view, and rests on the snowy line, dim in the distance, of the Pyrenees. Away, along the winding Llobregat, is the ancient city of Manresa (*Minorissa*), where Ignatius Loyola prepared himself for dedicating his sword to the Virgin of our Monserrat, by a long season of penitence and prayer. The general landscape, with its characteristic orange-tawny colour, and spots of olive-trees, has been sketched already. But our garden likewise overlooks or faces some of the most interesting sites of the mountain, such as the chapel that marks the place where the Image of the Virgin,—the magnet that drew the middle ages to Monserrat,

—was found; and the hill where once stood a Temple of Venus, and from which the devil who presided over it leaped down into the valley when his evil day had gone by! We are in the midst of a circle of queer legends which contrast oddly, in their gloom and barbarism, whether with the majesty of the surrounding scenery, or the bright, graceful, classical associations of the neighbouring Mediterranean. Nevertheless, we must dwell upon them a little, if we would understand the peculiar genius of the lonely and romantic place.

Monserrat, *Mons Serratus*, though it bears a Latin name, is not mentioned by any ancient writer. The eyes of the Scipios and of many a Roman must have rested upon it; but no mention of its strange structure found its way into the scanty notices which we have of this part of Hispania Tarraconensis. Yet that striking kind of structure was undoubtedly what first attracted to it the attention of Christianized Laletania. The legend was that the mountain was rent asunder, and *serrated* in its present fashion, by a sympathetic pang with the convulsions of Calvary at the moment of the Crucifixion. My reader will smile or sigh, as his disposition inclines him, at this theory. But if he thinks that it is obsolete in Spain, even at this moment of my writing, he little knows that curious country. There lies beside me, on my desk, a work upon Monserrat, by the present Abbot Muntadas (I believe he is still alive), a work published at Manresa in 1867, where the truth of the legend in question is seriously maintained.* Nay, the abbot declares that "nobody can doubt it without denying the faith, and without preferring the satanical pride (*el satanico orgullo*) of the intellect to the authority of holy books. . . . Shall we not admit, as Christians," continues Abbot Muntadas, "the earthquake that overthrew enormous rocks and mountains, while Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, was expiating our sins on Golgotha? Has it been proved to us that these phenomena belonged exclusively to Jerusalem or Judæa? . . . Are there not respectable traditions which point out other mountains of different parts of the world, which gave signs of grief like those of Jerusalem at the same moment and for the same cause? And do not these traditions honour, as one of so many, our Monserrat?" It is to be noted also, as part of the same tradition, that Monserrat is believed to have been barren before the time of the miracle in question, and that its profusion of fragrant shrub and flower is considered one result of that event.

We get upon surer ground when we are asked to believe that in the sixth century the mountain was frequented by many hermits, and that in the eighth castles were built upon it by the nobles, chiefly Franks, who were engaged in freeing this part of Spain from the Moors. The image of the Virgin is said to have been hidden, during that struggle, in a cave on Monserrat, by the governor and bishop of Barcelona, the exact date assigned being A.D. 718. It had been brought, in A.D. 50, to Barcelona,

* *Monserrat, su Pasado, su Presente, y su Porvenir, &c. &c.* Su autor el M. Ille. Sr. D. Miguel Muntadas, Abad, &c. Manresa, 1867.

by St. Peter,* who, unfortunately, was never in Spain, but who had been requested by the Virgin during her lifetime to make it, that she might show her love to the Catalans—of whom she had never heard. Till A.D. 880 it lay in the cave unknown, but was then miraculously revealed, and its worship was formally installed before the close of the ninth century, as the result of a singular example of Our Lady's mercy. There was a hermit of notable piety on the mountains, named Joan Garí, who unluckily fell into a snare laid for him by the devil with his usual ingenuity. Wilfred the Hairy was then Count of Barcelona, and had a daughter, Riquilda, possessed by a demon, who made it known that only Joan Garí, of Monserrat, could drive him out. Riquilda was sent to the mountain, and left alone with the holy man. But instead of expelling Riquilda's devil, he was tempted by one of his own. He first violated and then slew the Count's daughter—a crime, says our abbot, which made the mountain tremble to its foundation. But the crime was repented as soon as committed. He flung himself—it was A.D. 888—at the feet of the Sacred Image, and then made for Rome, to confess his sins and seek plenary indulgence from the Holy Father. The Pontiff granted pardon, but the penance which he imposed was severe. Garí was to go on all fours like a beast, and to expiate his crimes in this fashion all the way from Rome to Monserrat, and, afterwards, among the rocks and hills of Monserrat itself. He had passed six years in this condition of rational brutality, when another trial was made of him. In the year 894 the Count of Barcelona came to Monserrat, not to seek for his lost Riquildis, or Riquilda, but simply with a hunting-party. In the course of the chase they came upon some four-footed game of unusual size and appearance. The animal was, in fact, Garí, who knew the Count, though the Count took him only for a novel kind of beast. Placed in the Count's stable, Garí accepted this fresh penance with cheerfulness, and was soon rewarded by the Divine mercy. On the occasion of a grand banquet, the Count sent for his "monster" to amuse the company, when suddenly the heir of the house, a child, astonished them all by calling out,—in good Catalan, of course,—"*Llevat, Joan Garí, Deu t'ha perdonat tos pecats!*" "Rise, Joan Garí, God has forgiven thy sins!" In a moment the charm broke. Garí rose, then flung himself at the Count's feet, and with tears in his eyes confessed his crime, and recounted his subsequent history. The Count forgave him, and was conducted by him to the sepulchre of his murdered daughter, when—mercy upon mercy!—Requildis rose "from her sweet sleep in the arms of Mary," † and, with a smile on her lips, embraced her father. Riquildis resolved to dedicate her life to the Virgin and the mountain. A convent was founded by the Count for her and her sisters in religion, and of this she was the first abbess.

In the next century the nuns of Monserrat were transferred to Barcelona, and were succeeded by monks, whose first prior, Raymond, was appointed in A.D. 888. The monastery prospered. Donations flowed

* Muntadas, p. 106-7. † *Ibid.* p. 119.

in. Don Juan of Arragon was prior in A.D. 1320. The priory was made an abbey in 1410 by Benedict XIII., who had visited the holy spot, accompanied with twelve cardinals. The Sacred Image worked many miracles, and its shrine became crowded with lamps of silver. Warriors of princely houses retired to the hermitages of the mountain to repose in sanctity and die in peace. And so the generations rolled on, and the odour of sanctity about the place grew more and more dense. Its pilgrims were spiritual kings, and kings were found among the pilgrims. Charles V. came to Monserrat in 1538; Maximilian of Bohemia in 1550; and Philip III. in 1599, when the Sacred Image was moved from the old church to the new one, each spot where it had rested being marked by some memorial.

The image all this time continued to effect miracles of various kinds, and the monastery continued to flourish till the beginning of the present century. Charles IV. visited it in 1801. But evil days were at hand, and the miracles ceased just when they were most wanted. When the French invaded Spain in 1808, the Catalans, unluckily, resolved to fortify the mountain, but were unable to defend it after they had made the fortifications. The French took it in 1809, without inflicting serious damage; but in 1811 they took it again, carrying fire and sword everywhere; and in 1812 they destroyed all that the previous year had spared. The Catalans have little to boast of as regards the war of that time. Lord Collingwood was off the coast, and breathed his last there in March, 1810. "I have had nothing but distresses and disappointments," writes the noble old admiral, in March, 1809,—"disappointments in the languor and want of energy that appear among the Spaniards. Unless a great revolution take place in that country, which I do not expect, it is lost, and the liberal aid which we have given them will not save them from falling under the domination of France." * He did not live to see how true his words were; but the French remained masters of every important part of Catalonia till they were forced to yield it as a consequence of the victories of the Duke of Wellington elsewhere. Yet now we are told by Spanish orators, that the chief work of the Duke was following up and destroying armies which had been beaten before: †—

> For, benefits, though undeserved and great,
> No gratitude in felon minds beget,
> As tribute to his wit the churl receives the treat.‡

Certainly, the French behaved cruelly at Monserrat; almost as cruelly as the Spaniards during their civil wars behave to each other. They hunted the hermits from their retreats among the rocks, and shot them like wild animals. The tourist will find abundant exercise in reaching the highest of these hermitages by winding stone paths along the edges of the ravines,—over gorges clad with many a wild tree and pleasant shrub. From the loftiest summits, on a clear day, the Balearic Islands may be seen, and many a league of land known to Hannibal and

* *Correspondence*, i. 335.

† Sr. CASTELLAR said this not many weeks ago in the Cortes. ‡ DRYDEN.

to Cæsar. The hermitages are by old conventionalism called "caves;" but the truth rather is that they were a kind of comfortable cottages; and sanctity in a cottage, like love in the same, may not have been an unpleasant affair. It was a blank life, intellectually, no doubt. But I cannot help thinking that even when the sanctity was real, it was a good deal helped by sheer honest stupidity,—a sheer want of the energy necessary either to conquer the world or to enjoy it. Then, there was the little vanity, too, of being one of "our saints;" and as for social and personal privations, the Spaniard—saintly or not—was never given to eating well, and never suffered severely from the want of a tub. Yet there must have been poetic recluses also—men sick of court and camp—who in the delicious air of those rugged heights found a home such as the eyrie is to the weary eagle.

The charm of Monserrat—at all events to the northern man who has a love of nature and a sentiment regarding it, of which Spaniards are destitute—lies in the rambles to which it tempts him, and which refresh his soul after the humdrum contact of Catalan traders; in the sight of the sun coming up the valley from the Mediterranean, and awakening the whole landscape into joy and song. But he will not neglect the monuments of the old days, battered and neglected though they be. Monserrat has never recovered from the effects of the war. There are beautiful fragments of Gothic architecture there, but they are patched with modern wall; and the ancient tombs have lost the character of resting-places, and become mutilated curiosities. Empty windows stare at you from which many a monkish head, that Murillo might have painted, once looked out. The chapel itself, where the handful of monks still remaining perform service, is large and elegant, but it has been "restored," and the effect of modern restorations in Spain is somehow always tawdry. In passing to it, your attention is arrested by a tablet, a Latin inscription on which announces that the blessed Ignatius à Loyola, here, with much prayer and weeping (*multa prece fletuque*), devoted himself to God and the Virgin, and watched through the night. From hence, the inscription concludes, he set forth to found the society of Jesus in the year 1522. Loyola, a Biscayan by birth, and wounded at Pamplona, the capital of Navarre, has a close connection with Catalonia in his spiritual history. Here, at Monserrat, after giving his clothes to a beggar, he clad himself in the *saccus* (of sack-cloth or hair-cloth) and set out for the neighbouring town of Manresa, mentioned above, where he lived upon bread and water procured with alms; fasted every day except Sunday; chastised his flesh with chains and iron whips; and rested only on the bare ground. At Manresa, he passed a whole year; commenced the study of grammar among schoolboys; and composed the famous Exercises. Monserrat used to boast the possession of the sword which he dedicated on the altar of the Virgin. But it has disappeared; and the claim of the church of Belen, in Barcelona, to have it now, is doubtful and denied.

The supreme interest of the chapel centres, of course, in the Sacred Image of the Virgin, which, dressed in a rich white garment fringed with gold, sits high above the altar. She holds her Infant on her knee, both figures being black, and carved (it is said) out of the same piece of wood. At certain hours admission is given to see the image closely, and it is approached from behind. The entry is made through a saloon, in which are kept the offerings made to her ladyship by the great and the wealthy—such of them, that is, as have survived time and war—with the humbler but perhaps sincerer tributes of the gratitude of simple people, who believed themselves to have been saved by her in the hour of peril. Sailors' hats and clothes suspended on the wall recall the beloved Venusian, with his—

Me tabula sacer
Votiva paries indicat uvida
Suspendisse potenti
Vestimenta maris deo.

And there are not only curious *tabulæ*, depicting cases of miraculous preservation; but some beautiful specimens of antique lace, for which Catalonia was once as famous as for jewellery and silver-work, before she had become a retail dépôt for French goods, and a centre for the manufacture of second-rate cotton-stuffs, which no amount of the most bigoted "Protection" can coddle into excellence. Having lingered some minutes in this saloon, the tourist may see, if he likes, a room, the walls of which are painted over—in an inferior style—with the legend already narrated, of Joan Garí. Now comes the ascent of the stairs leading up to the image—the *Mare de Deu de Monserrat*. Preparations are here made to impress the visitor's mind with a salutary awe. There are white statues placed, with finger on lip, bearing the monitory epigraph—"*Sube y calla*—Mount and be silent!" You mount and are silent, and find yourself in a little room, in the front of which the image sits, presiding over the chapel, with its back towards you. One by one the party are allowed to stand upon a little stool on her right, and to contemplate her closely; while a monk with downcast eyes, and slightly inclined head, stands silently by. The face is long, with a nose curving gently, a somewhat pretty face, and with an expression which surprises you by its modern and rather sentimental character. Is it the ancient image that has so strange and varied a history, and which was carried to a place of safety by the monks when the smoke of the French fires rose among these primæval rocks? There are some who say that it is not, but I have seen no proof of this. In either case, to approach so near any object of the transcendent veneration of one's fellow-creatures makes a certain impression even on heretics and sceptics. You take leave of the Lady respectfully—while her countrymen devoutly kiss her hand or her Babe.

Monserrat may now be visited from Barcelona in the course of one long day. But this is fatiguing and unsatisfactory, and it is better to sleep in the aposentos of S. Alphonso and return next afternoon.

Yes or No?

A PLEBISCITUM IN THE DUCHY OF GEROLSTEIN.

I.

There was a fine to-do in the town of Gerolstein on that famous morning when two trumpeters were seen to issue from the Ducal palace, preceded by two heralds, and followed by two drummers, and when this procession of six, to which presently the Burgomaster was added, walked in state to the Rathhaus and posted up on the principal door a proclamation headed: "Rodolphus III., *by the dispensation of Providence and the National Will*, Grand Duke of Gerolstein: *To all whom these Presents may concern, greeting.*" The Gerolsteiners had possibly been on the look-out for some such event as this, for no sooner were the Burgomaster and his troop descried than immediately there was a rush. Seven-and-twenty citizens taking refreshments in a café opposite the Rathhaus darted across the road. Nine-and-thirty ragamuffins, occupied in doing nothing at the corners of the great square, where the municipal edifice stood, joined in pursuit. Sixteen small boys just let out from school set up a halloo; and three cripples, drawn along in the vortex, clattered over the paving-stones with their crutches and grasped desperately about them for support. The two trumpeters, the two heralds, the two drummers, and the Burgomaster, undaunted by this display of excitement, stood bravely together. But just as the foremost citizen was reaching the Rathhaus the biggest of the two trumpeters (for one was bigger than the other) put his instrument to his lips and made such a braying that the whole crowd stopped short as if galvanized, and rammed their fingers into their ears. This, however, was only a momentary interruption. The first shock over, everybody pushed forward again. The biggest of the two trumpeters was squeezed flat against a wall; the Burgomaster, in trying to pick up his hat, which had somehow gone away, was bowled over on to all-fours; one of the cripples was knocked down; and the smallest of the two trumpeters, feeling the elbow of a fat man on his waistband, yelled piteously for help. But as everybody wanted to read the proclamation, no attention was paid to these episodes. The principal door of the Rathhaus was just wide enough to admit four of a row; so that it became a delicate matter when two hundred or more—for the crowd was increasing every moment—insisted upon getting to the front, and sought to attain this object by clambering over each other's shoulders, kicking each other on the shins, and exchanging personal invectives. There is no saying what might have happened had not one of the heralds suddenly

cried at the top of his voice that there was no need to push, as he had plenty more copies of the proclamation under his tabard. This, of course, occasioned a diversion. The herald was instantaneously mobbed, hustled, and notwithstanding his indignant protests, despoiled of every proclamation he possessed. After which, the Gerolsteiners, perceiving that the second herald had only got a pastepot and brush, and that nothing was to be had of him, broke up into animated groups, leaving the space fronting the Rathhaus in possession of the three cripples, two of the small boys, and three or four corpulent persons, who, being averse to gymnastics, had taken no part in the scurry. The two flattened trumpeters then tried to regain their breath by patting each other on the back and wheezing in unison; the plundered herald appealed for sympathy in his trouble to his brother of the pastepot; the two drummers examined their drums all over to see that there were no bumps on them; and the Burgomaster, having recovered his hat, brushed it indignantly with the sleeve of his coat, and shook his fist at the crowd, crying, "*Schafskopfen!*" which is the German rendering for *blockheads!*

Here is the proclamation which the Gerolsteiners were so anxious to read:—

"People of Gerolstein!

"I have given you twice nine years of peace and prosperity not unattended with glory. Eighteen years ago, when I installed myself in the Ducal throne of Gerolstein without asking your permission, you gave proof of tact by ratifying the self-appointment I had made; and, further, evinced your regard for truth by declaring, in an almost unanimous vote, that my flattering antecedents, as well as the scrupulously honourable way in which I had discharged a trust you had already reposed in me, inspired you with the fullest confidence in my aptitude for the task of governing you. Acting upon a precedent long established in Gerolstein, I forthwith submitted to you the project of a new constitution, which you approved with enthusiasm, even as you had approved some dozen other constitutions before, and would, no doubt, approve any dozen more hereafter which it might please me or my successors to propose to you. Not that you are versatile, O People of Gerolstein! nor flippant, nor servile, as certain people pretend. You are, on the contrary, a courtly nation, well-bred, obedient, and imbued to a rare extent with the expediency of always remaining on good terms with your Duke for the time being. Thus, I am proud to say, after two-and-twenty years of intercourse, that we have never once quarrelled; for I have never expressed a wish or a whim but you have hastened to gratify it with perfect alacrity, good taste, and obedience. Whenever I have asked for money you have given it me without seeking to know the use of it; whenever I have felt in a warlike mood you have equipped me with troops and fleets, and not pulled too wry a face when the troops came back crippled, the fleets dismantled, and I had nothing to show you as compensation. Further-

more, in the long duel I have fought against my inveterate enemy, the Hydra of Anarchy, I am pleased to acknowledge that you have always lent me the most ready and considerate succour. Journalists, historians, liberal politicians, and other fomenters of discord, have met with no more sympathy at your hands than they have at mine. When I imprisoned or banished them you did me the inestimable service of turning them into ridicule, so that more than one man of talent who might have become a dangerous antagonist for me, had you given him any encouragement, has ended by coming over to my side, feeling there were no thanks to be got by advocating your 'grievances.' In a word, O People of Gerolstein! you have been loyal subjects, subservient, tractable, and so uniformly patient, that, in looking back now upon my eighteen years' reign, I am struck by this admirable result—that although I have increased your taxes with unvarying regularity year after year; although I have led you into more bootless wars than any sovereign I can for the moment call to mind; although I have doubled your national debt; and although I have laid a complete embargo on that liberty of pen and speech which you profess to hold more dear than life itself: yet your confidence in me remains unshaken, and you are as ready now as ever you were to give me your money, your votes, or any other mortal thing I might ask of you. This disposition does you so much credit that I have determined on writing this appeal to solicit your suffrages under new, and somewhat peculiar circumstances. That famous constitution which we proclaimed together eighteen years ago, and which was to have lasted for ever, has, I am sorry to say, grown a little rusty. There are even one or two places where it is cracked altogether (though the fault is not mine, I assure you), and the object of the present request is to ask for your formal assent to certain unavoidable emendations which I have been compelled, very much against my will, to introduce into it. Do not be alarmed, however; for the alterations are, in the main, insignificant. There will be small change in my Ministers, smaller still in my Parliament, and no change at all in me. To use a homely metaphor, O People of Gerolstein! the drink sold at the tavern will be the same, although there will be a new sign-board and one or two fresh waiters. Nevertheless, slight as these changes are, I have reasons of my own for desiring that they should be ratified with as much publicity and solemnity as possible; for, albeit I have not been in the habit of consulting you except when it suited me, I have always thought, and I think still, that everything done without you is illegal. On Sunday, the 8th proximo, therefore, you will all be convoked together in your comitia, and bidden to answer Yes or No to the following question:—

"Do you, or do you not, approve the changes I have introduced into the Constitution, and ratify the recent Decree of my Upper House, which declares for the fourth or fifth time that I and my Heirs shall rule over you perpetually?

"And, in order that there may be no misunderstanding as to what reply you should make to this inquiry, I now say:—

"Let all of you who are orderly people, fond of peace and good-living, virtuous, even-minded, and desirous of dying comfortably in your beds, without being butchered by lawless cut-throats, answer: 'Yes.'

"But let all of you who are idle vagabonds, associates of thieves and habitual criminals, rascals with a thirst for plunder and a desire to have the eyes of my police fixed on you, answer: 'No.'

"Your Duke,

"*Verbum sap. sat.* "RODOLPHUS.

"P.S.—To prevent mistakes, a voting-paper with the word 'Yes' will be sent to every one of you. All other papers, bearing the word 'No,' you will do well to tear up as subversive, incendiary, and likely to lead to unpleasantness if found in your possession."

Now, amongst the persons who read this proclamation in the Rathhaus Platz, was a certain Rothwein. He was not much of a citizen was this Rothwein. The Commissary of Police, Blutwurst, had the poorest possible opinion of him; Herr von Dunderkopf, the Judge of the Correctional Tribunal, had predicted that he would end badly; and Baron von Nichtsthun, the Minister of the Interior, had said of him, with a sigh, that if there were many men like this Rothwein in the Duchy, he—Nichtsthun—would be obliged to resign his seals. The fact is, Rothwein was troublesome. He had a newspaper of his own, in which he often spoke scornfully of Blutwurst, and laughed at Dunderkopf, and turned Nichtsthun into ridicule. Moreover, he showed no respect for Count von Tost und Wasser, the Prime Minister; and, what was infinitely more serious than all this, he frequently said unpleasant things of his Serene Highness the Grand Duke Rodolphus and of her Serene Highness the Grand Duchess Iphigenia. Rothwein was a member of the Reichsrath, which made it difficult to deal with him. Had he been a simple journalist there would have been no trouble in disposing of him by a term of imprisonment more or less protracted. But, by the law of Gerolstein, certain immunities were accorded to members of the Reichsrath, and the Commissary Blutwurst had no power to seize Rothwein after dark and convey him off to prison, there to abide six months without trial, as was frequently done in the case of lesser Gerolsteiners, unprotected by the Ducal constitution. Naturally one or two persons argued that this quasi-impunity should have been an inducement to Rothwein to be magnanimous and to hold his peace; but Rothwein, whose moral sense was perhaps crooked, declined to see it in this light, and even had the bad taste to rejoice aloud, that he could not be arrested without being sure of a trial. So much cynicism pained honest folk; and at the time Duke Rodolphus issued his proclamation, Rothwein was by no means in good odour with the public. People were just then very enthusiastic about the new Minister, Tost und Wasser, who had supplanted the Minister Bubblewitz; and they bitterly accused Rothwein of not doing justice to that great man. But to this Rothwein answered, that

he did not believe in Tost und Wasser any more than he believed in Bubblewitz; and that as there was as much taxing, soldiering, and press-prosecuting under the new state of things as there had been before, he could not see what one had gained by the change. "Tost und Wasser may mean well," said he, "but he is weak; and he is so pleased to find himself in a gold-laced coat, that he does nothing else but look at himself in the glass to see how it fits him." Needless to remark, that this flippant way of alluding to a Cabinet Minister was sternly resented by all order-loving patriots, and Rothwein had the satisfaction of reading every morning, in the Government prints, that he was a dangerous citizen; and that if the reign of liberty were never established in Gerolstein it would certainly be he who would be to blame for it.

Rothwein had not been amongst those who had jostled the Herr Burgomaster and plundered his herald; but he had bought a copy of the proclamation from one of the ragamuffins for five silber-groschen, and had then retired to the café opposite the Rathhaus, in order to read it in peace. He had scarcely read ten lines, however, before he bounded from his chair and rushed out on to the pavement to call a cab. The square was by that time alive and swarming with people. There was a mighty hubbub, too, for, according to the wont of the Gerolsteiners, everybody was gesticulating and discoursing at his loudest, without paying any attention to his neighbour. Just as Rothwein appeared, something new was preparing. The Burgomaster, who had seemingly ended by recovering his equanimity as well as his head-dress, had marshalled his trumpeters, heralds, and drummers in a row, and was giving them a word of command. Speedily a loud blast, together with a prolonged rolling of drums, rent the air, and the same instant the Herr Burgomaster, waving his hat three times above his head, shouted: "Long live our Grand Duke Rodolphus!" a cry which was immediately taken up with amazing vigour by the three cripples, the small boys, and all the available ragamuffins, though not by the respectable bystanders. "Hurray!" piped the cripples; "Hooray!" squeaked the small boys; "Hurrah!" bawled the ragamuffins; and one of these last, who was standing near Rothwein, put so much spirit into his exercise, that the Tribune, grown indignant, caught hold of him and shook him by the neck.—

"What are you shouting for, you booby?" he asked.

"Don't!—Let me go!" gasped the booby.

"What are you shouting for?" repeated Rothwein.

"I don't know," whined the other. "They gave me a *gulden* to shout."

"You're a dog," rejoined Rothwein. "There's a thaler for you to hold your tongue. Go and fetch me a fly."

But this episode had attracted the attention of several amongst the crowd, and Rothwein being recognized, he was soon surrounded by a gaping throng, from amidst which at once uprose a cry, "Rothwein, Rothwein, tell us what this proclamation means!" "How are we to vote?" "Rothwein, shall you say 'Yes' or 'No?'"

Others, going straight to the point, clamoured for a speech; and, as this proposal had the merit of being practical, it was soon adopted by the whole crowd—barring one or two gentlemen, who looked suspiciously like emissaries of the Commissary Blutwurst, and who made praiseworthy attempts to turn the excitement into a dynastic channel, by shouting with rare tenacity, "Long live the Gra-a-and Doo-oo-ook!" At first, Rothwein took no heed of the clamours, only shrugging his shoulders and humming a tune *sotto voce*. But when at last a fly had been fetched him, and he had taken his seat in it—and yet the people still refused to let him go, determining not to be baulked of their harangue—he stood up and said grimly, though with great politeness and with his hat off: "Gerolsteiners, you want me to make you a speech, and I think it a pity to disappoint you"——(Here there was a dead hush). "Our precious Grand Duke has just issued a proclamation which you don't understand, but which you have been cheering lustily nevertheless, according to your time-honoured habit. I am not sure that it will benefit you greatly to have his Highness's message interpreted to you; but, if you think it will, here is the pith of it in very few words:—Our Grand Duke is going to make a fool of you, as he has done numerous times before, and as he will do on many future occasions again, should Heaven spare him a long life. But you must not be surprised at this, for so long as there are peoples like yourselves, there will be Dukes like this Rodolphus; and the only wonder is, that you should not be made fools of more frequently. Continue, O Gerolsteiners, to be the lively, chirping, feather-headed, purposeless nation of caper-cutters I have always known you to be, and I promise you shall never want for Dukes to bamboozle you, nor for moralists to tell you, as I now do, with the utmost respect and the sincerest conviction—that it serves you right!"

This said, the Tribune Rothwein put on his hat again, and said to the cabman, "Drive to the Palace of the Reichsrath." And then he rode off, leaving the Gerolsteiners looking for all the world as if they thought the joke a poor one.

II.

On arriving at the Parliament House Rothwein found a scene of almost as much animation as at the Rathhaus Platz. The news of the proclamation had had time to spread half over the town, and members of the Reichsrath were rattling up every moment in broughams, phaetons, or cabs, to talk over the event and hold counsel upon it. Whatever lingering doubts Rothwein may have preserved as to the true significance of the Grand Duke's message were dispelled at once when he set foot within the House; for he had only to glance at the faces of some of his colleagues to perceive that his perspicacity had not been at fault. There were certain legislators, liege-vassals of the ex-Minister Bubblewitz, and who had not been seen to smile ever since that statesman had retired *vice* Tost und Wasser, who were now radiant. The Deputy Kartofeln was laughing

with all his might at a joke of the Deputy Dummerkerl's. Kartofeln, who had been laid up with the jaundice, on hearing that the new Ministry intended to bring in a Reform Bill! Herr Weissnicht and Herr Gehtnicht, two honourable utilities, who had sat so long in the House that they could sleep a whole debate through without being awoke by the speeches, were shaking each other's hands hysterically and inviting one another to dinner. The Deputy Ganser, who represented a district where no less than one elector out of every two hundred could read, was gratifying himself with a hornpipe in a corner. And another bright specimen of representative humanity, the Herr von Spinach, who had once held a seat in the Bubblewitz Cabinet, and had never been able to comprehend why he had been turned out, was running his fingers through his hair and muttering in tones of unmixed felicity, "*Mein Gott! heute bin ich zufrieden.*" On the other hand, however, all the members who were supposed to have placed their trust in Tost und Wasser were looking glum—oh, so glum! Rothwein, who had meditated saying a few epigrammatic things at their expense, felt his wit disarmed. He had not even courage to say that generous "I told you so," which our friends never fail to lay as a balm upon our wounds when they have seen us come to grief. In passing by the Deputy Milchbrod, a benign legislator, who always liked to take the best view of things, but who, on this occasion, was twirling his thumbs in pensive melancholy, he held out his hand and said: "What is the matter, Herr Milchbrod?" and to this Milchbrod answered with a sigh, "Oh, nothing is the matter," which was a pious falsehood; for there *was* something the matter, and Milchbrod knew it. But to make all this more clear we had better, perhaps, take a short retrospective survey of political events in Gerolstein, during the reign of the Grand Duke Rodolphus.

A few months previously to his proclamation Rodolphus III., having then reigned eighteen years, had begun to find that his position was getting a little bit shaky, and that his subjects no longer felt for him that boundless admiration to which, rightly or wrongly, he considered himself entitled. This alarmed Rodolphus, for, as he had been at some trouble in securing the throne, he naturally felt the most extreme reluctance to part with it, and the barest allusion to the possibility of a catastrophe threw him into fits of gloom, during which he became ferocious and formidable to his acquaintances. To do him justice, if his subjects gave tokens of discontent it was not altogether because he ruled them badly. His rule was no doubt detestable, but the main objection to it in the eyes of certain Gerolsteiners, was that it had lasted eighteen years; and this would have been a damning blot on any rule, no matter how wise and how beneficent. As a matter of fact the Gerolsteiners were not very competent judges on the score of good government. They had had a Duke who was a mighty man of valour, and gave them an uncommon deal of warring, so that they were delighted to see him go. Next came two Dukes who fought in moderation, for which the Gerolsteiners despised them heartily. After that came a Duke who was a man of peace and disposed to treat them

kindly; but him, after nearly twenty years' reign, they drove out with every mark of ignominy and contempt; setting up in his stead a new sort of government with nobody at the helm, which proved about as fantastic a contrivance as anything that had been seen for many a long day in Gerolstein. Instructed by the fate of his predecessors the new Duke Rodolphus made up his mind that what the Gerolsteiners loved above all things was novelty, and that for the sake of change they would gladly barter a new coat for an old one, a sound head for a broken one, or a government of honest men for a government of rapscallions. He accordingly set to work ruling them on spasmodic principles. Whenever he had anything new to announce to them, either a war or a reform or a new repressive law (and of this last novelty the Grand Duke took care there should always be a liberal supply), he did it suddenly, without previous warning, as one lets off a pistol or a cracker. And this system proved an excellent one, for the Gerolsteiners, being plunged from one sensation into another, ended by growing so confused that they no longer knew whether they were standing on their heads or their heels, and even came to fancy that they were being governed intelligently, just as men fancy they are walking straight when they are drunk and stagger along in zigzags. However, there is a flaw in the system which is this, that novelties sometimes run short. A man who wants to keep unruly dogs in order can only throw bones at them so long as he has bones to throw; and Duke Rodolphus having got rid of all his stock of bones began to dread lest he should be obliged to throw some of his dinner—to wit, certain prerogatives of his own to which he was fondly attached, and which he had not the slightest inclination to surrender. The party in the State who barked for more bones were not precisely a majority, but they made as much noise as if they were. His Serene Highness would have been glad to silence them by firing grape-shot at their heads, and he was warmly seconded in this view by his Minister of War, the General Boum, who repeatedly asked to be allowed to go out and exterminate the enemy. But Duke Rodolphus was growing old, and he had no longer so much faith in the efficacy of grape-shot as he had once had. The Minister Bubblewitz was called upon for his opinion, and opined for more repressive laws. The Grand Duchess Iphigenia, who was an amiable lady, but whose notions on politics were as hazy as those of most pretty women, agreed with Bubblewitz. The Duke, however, was afraid. The clamours of the more-bones party, headed by Count von Tost and Wasser, were growing each moment louder. His Highness threw out a delicate hint to Bubblewitz, that, perhaps, if he resigned his seals to the Count, the sacrifice might be appreciated by the public; but Bubblewitz declined to accept this hint. There was nothing for it but decisive action. The Duke, after smoking a boxful of cigarettes, to bring his courage to the starting point, one bright morning turned the whole Bubblewitz Ministry out of doors, and entrusted the forming of a new Cabinet to the liberal Tost und Wasser.

Now, Count von Tost und Wasser was certainly as honourable a

statesman as had ever fingered a portfolio. He was honourable from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, and budded all over with good intentions like a rose-bush. But, unfortunately for him, he was descended from two families of diametrically opposite instincts, the family of Tost and that of Wasser: the former an energetic race, that had often faced the fire, and was hardened in consequence: the latter a somewhat lymphatic family, apt to be too soon ruffled and diverted from its course by contrary winds. So long as the two opposite elements in the Count's nature worked in unison, there was nothing much to apprehend, for the one tempered the other. But whenever one characteristic became predominant, things were liable to go wrong. At first, there was nothing to complain of. The Count, delighted to find himself Prime Minister, made an infinite number of eloquent speeches, which transported the Gerolsteiners, so that they waxed enthusiastic, and, as we have already stated, evinced their indignation against Rothwein, who refused to be enthusiastic too. To hear people talk of Tost und Wasser, one would have fancied that the unlucky Gerolsteiners had never known such a thing as a respectable Minister. All sorts of grave old gentlemen, who had been wont to compare Rodolphus III. disparagingly with past Grand Dukes and to look askance at him, now came forward, and declared that the moment Count von Tost und Wasser was at the head of affairs, they consented to think better of Rodolphus. Even the *Paradoxische Zeitung*, a paper much in honour at Gerolstein, from having never flattered anybody, and having always advocated the same set of principles (a thing very rare in Gerolstein!)—even this paper announced, through the pen of its editor, the talented Professor von Paradochs, that the Tost und Wasser Cabinet deserved to be supported if it only kept true to its promises. All this, however, was too good to last. The new Chief Adviser of the Grand Duke, like those aëronauts who have been shot too abruptly into the clouds, began to feel his head turn. Gradually the Tost side of his nature came uppermost. He fell to talking about himself and laying down plans for the future. He said, "*I* shall do this," or, "*I* shall not do this," and hurled defiance at his enemies. No doubt he meant well; but his Serene Highness the Grand Duke, who had been silently noticing that people now made great use of the name Tost und Wasser, and spoke scarcely at all of Rodolphus, ended by forming the sagacious reflection that if this sort of thing were allowed to go on much longer, the Gerolsteiners might very possibly discover that a Grand Duke was by no means necessary to their happiness. "By the sword of my father!" said he, swearing his ducal oath, "but it seems to me this man takes his part in earnest;" and Rodolphus III., with a dark frown on his countenance, bethought him of his Minister, Bubblewitz, whose merits, being of a decidedly negative sort, had never given him cause for uneasiness. We here open a parenthesis, O Parliamentary and Constitutional Reader! to remark that you must not be surprised or incensed at Rodolphus. Look at the matter from what point of view you will, a Duke who has wielded despotic power cannot be

expected to feel great sympathy for a Tost und Wasser, who seems disposed to supplant him. In vain will you point out to that Duke that other Dukes in neighbouring States manage to get on very well with nothing of dukeship but the name: this mode of reasoning will be no more conclusive than if you were to observe to one of us that plenty of people in a neighbouring street manage to exist without breakfast. Rodolphus III. would gladly have turned constitutional to please his subjects, provided he might have remained despotic to please himself. His ideal of parliamentary government was the possession of ten Ministers who would assume the responsibility of all unpopular measures, but allow him to reap the glory of all popular decrees. This, too, was Bubblewitz's ideal of government; for, as that great statesman exclaimed very wisely, "What would it signify to me how unpopular I was, so long as I were allowed to keep my place!" But, unhappily for Tost und Wasser, *his* ideal seemed to be different.

One morning Tost und Wasser, on going to the palace to hold a council, found Rodolphus III. and the Grand Duchess seated together in the Grand Duke's study. From the animated look on their faces, and from the rapid glances they exchanged as the Prime Minister entered, it was pretty apparent that they had been holding important conversation; and the experienced eye of Tost und Wasser (for his eye had become experienced in office) at once detected on a chair a hat, which had evidently been left there by an oversight, and which looked suspiciously like the hat of the ex-Minister, Bubblewitz. This sight filled him with a strange presentiment, which was not immediately dispelled when the Duke said to him, in that polite but impenetrable tone he possessed, "That is the project of the new Parliamentary Constitution in your pocket, Count?"

"Yes, Highness," responded the Minister, extracting a ream of paper from the tails of his embroidered coat.

"Ah, very well. I have the utmost confidence in you, and I am prepared to sign the document at once."

"Your Highness does me too much honour," rejoined Tost und Wasser, heaving a sigh of relief.

"Yes, prepared to sign it at once," proceeded the Grand Duke, blandly. "Only"—and here his Serene Highness gave a slight cough, whilst her Serene Highness the Duchess fanned herself rapidly—"only I am going to add a slight clause of my own to it." And Rodolphus III. unfolded a little piece of notepaper which he had been holding in his hand.

"It's not much," added he, with a calm smile at his Minister—"not much. The scope of it is simply this—that I shall always have power to suppress your Constitution when I grow tired of it."

The Prime Minister, Tost und Wasser, turned pale.

"But—but—Prince," he faltered, "that wouldn't be parliamentary at all."

"Oh yes, it would," answered the Grand Duke, pleasantly. "Look here, for instance: suppose I find my Parliament growing bumptious—mind you, I only say 'suppose.' Well, it is just possible I should like to give it a lesson in good manners. Perhaps I might abolish it temporarily and lock a few of the members up; only, in order to make everything legal, I should convoke my people three weeks afterwards and ask them whether they approved of what I had done? That's parliamentary enough surely!"

His Excellency the Count von Tost und Wasser pulled a wry face. He had a lively recollection of a certain lesson in good manners given eighteen years before by the Grand Duke Rodolphus to a Parliament of which he, Tost und Wasser, formed part; and he perfectly remembered the convocation of the people a few weeks afterwards to pronounce an opinion on this lesson. It is to be presumed that neither of the reminiscences were particularly gratifying, for the Prime Minister remained silent and glanced piteously at the hat of his predecessor, Bubblewitz, which appeared to be grinning at him diabolically.

Rodolphus III. took some Turkish tobacco out of a pouch and began twirling a cigarette. The Grand Duchess Iphigenia opened a bonbonnière on the table and nibbled a few sugar-plums.

"I also purpose," continued the Duke, striking a match, "to convoke my people to a preliminary Plebiscitum without delay. I wish to give them an opportunity of declaring that they love me now as much as they ever did. Such a declaration will serve me as a warrant in case—ahem!—in case my Parliament should ever be disposed to forget who is the real master in Gerolstein."

Count von Tost und Wasser winced, but still remained silent. The hat of the statesman Bubblewitz was grinning more diabolically than ever.

"I hope you are of the same way of thinking as I, Count," added Rodolphus, with perhaps the faintest tinge of sardonic emphasis on the word *hope*. "I should be sorry to part with you."

What was Count von Tost und Wasser to do? No doubt had he there and then explained to the Duke that his Serene Highness's notions as to parliamentary government were not cast in the same mould as those which he himself professed to hold—no doubt had he done this and laid down his portfolio to prove that he was in earnest, Rodolphus III. might have been placed in a delicate predicament and have left the cigarette, which he was then complacently smoking, unfinished. The truth is, Tost und Wasser could have better afforded to fall out with Rodolphus than Rodolphus to fall out with him, and he was a ninny for not seeing it. But when *do* we see things as we ought to see them? Just at the very moment when his Tost characteristics would have been of most use to him, the Wasser portion of the Minister's temperament unexpectedly came uppermost. He saw himself threatened with dismissal and obliged to forego the blandishments and koo-tooings which had made the past

few months of his life so unprecedentedly sweet to him; and the vision gave him a sort of cold sensation in the back. He stammered, reddened, made a show of depositing his portfolio, caught it up again, wiped his forehead with his handkerchief, and ended by exclaiming meekly,—

"Very well, your Highness, it shall be as you wish."

Had he been quick enough to notice the bright twinkle that lit up the eyes of the Grand Duke Rodolphus at these words, and the arch smile that flitted over the pretty lips of the Duchess Iphigenia, poor Tost und Wasser might have guessed that in the bargain he had just struck, he had not got altogether the best of it. As it was, he fancied he could hear something disagreeably like a snigger issue from behind the curtain which separated the ducal study from another apartment. And he would have wagered a ducat that he had heard just such a snigger before issue from the lips of Bubblewitz. It was on the morrow of this interesting conversation beween Rodolphus III. and his Minister that the Herr Burgomaster posted up the ducal proclamation at the Rathhaus; that the Tribune Rothwein made his speech from the fly, and that certain other memorable events took place, which we are about to chronicle.

III.

We left the Tribune Rothwein shaking hands in the Parliament House with the Deputy Milchbrod, and looking with an eye of compassion on the members of the Tost und Wasser party. These unfortunate Deputies, erewhile so exulting, were huddling close together much after the fashion of newly-shorn sheep over whom a sharp east wind is blowing; one was almost surprised not to see their teeth chatter. When Rothwein arrived at the House his Excellency the Prime Minister had not yet put in an appearance, but was expected every moment. Everybody wanted to see him: the members who supported him and were looking so blank; the members who pretended to support him but in reality hated him for ousting Bubblewitz, and were only waiting for an occasion to pay off old scores; and the members who, like Rothwein, neither hated nor supported him, but thought poorly of his capacity, and were anathematized by the other two parties (especially by the Bubblewitzers) for a set of factious, intriguing churls. It was close upon two o'clock: at two o'clock the sittings of the Reichsrath begin, and this time a stormy debate was expected. Already the door outside leading to the strangers' gallery was blocked up by a respectable serpentine *queue* of some two hundred yards' length; and tickets were being hotly bidden for at five or six thalers apiece. Inside the House the lobbies offered the animated spectacle of some couple of dozen honourable members being chased into corners and round pillars by exasperated constituents who wanted orders, and found it impossible to obtain them. Six or seven ladies who had managed to glide in, sentries and ushers notwithstanding, were expostulating with new-fledged Deputies on the tender side of forty, and

laughing to scorn the idea that there being no more room in the House was a sufficient excuse for issuing no more tickets. Three messengers were being reduced to a condition of idiotcy by having cards forced into their hands by dozens of people at once, and being enjoined to convey them to members who had not yet come, or who were absent on leave, or who were sulky and answered the messengers by telling them in expressive vernacular to go *zum Teufel*. A few journalists, with no hats on and voluminous note-books in their hands, were darting about in search of echoes, and preparing groans and gnashing of teeth for editors by pencilling off sheets of illegible manuscript. Calm and impassive amidst this scene of hubbub stood a picket of soldiers, a drummer and two officers, the guard of honour waiting to escort the Herr President from his private apartments to the debate-room.

Of a sudden there was a cry, "Here he comes," a pattering of feet, a throwing wide of folding doors, and at the sound the whole crowd,—members, constituents, journalists, ladies, and messengers—rushed along together to catch a sight of his Excellency the Prime Minister. Yes, there he came, holding his head high—a trifle too high perhaps for a man quite sure of himself; for we have no need to be so brazen when we have nothing to fear. On both sides of him heads were uncovered, and bowed down like ears of corn set in motion by a breeze. Members of the Right, members of the Left, members of the Centre, all raised their hats; for people are civil in Gerolstein, and the fact that an honourable gentleman will, in five minutes' time, accuse his Excellency of duplicity, turpitude, and three or four out of the seven deadly sins, does not make the slightest difference in the respect with which he salutes him in the lobby. Of course, however, there were various shades in the degrees of alacrity evinced by the members. The most effusive were the Bubblewitzers, who behaved at the sight of his Excellency as if they had beheld their dearest friend. There had been a time when the Count von Tost und Wasser, knowing what these demonstrations were worth, had never been able to refrain from smiling when he saw a Bubblewitzer come forward and worship him; but, alas! these times were past now. To the horror and disgust of his followers, the Prime Minister smiled a smile of welcome to the Deputy Weissnicht, and held out his hand to Gehtnicht, and spoke soothingly to the Deputy Kartofeln. On the contrary, happening to catch the eye of Rothwein, he did his best to wither up that tribune by a look of ineffable scorn, and as Rothwein was not the man to receive such a look without paying it back with compound interest, a somewhat unparliamentary interchange of compliments might have ensued, had not, fortunately for the dignity of the Gerolsteinian legislature, the hour of two opportunely struck; upon which, the picket of soldiers already mentioned presented arms, the two officers unsheathed their swords, the drummer beat a rattattoo, and his Excellency the President, majestuous in a swallow-tail coat and a star of brilliants, emerged suddenly from a door, darted across the lobby, and vanished into the debate-room, whither he was instantly followed by the

two hundred and ninety members of the Reichsrath, who swarmed into their places as if they were storming a battery; whilst a lean and wizen usher, with a chain round his neck, shouted as loud as he could manage: "Hats off, if you please, gentlemen, hats off; the Herr President has taken his seat and the sitting has commenced!"

There was "gunpowder in the air," as soldiers say. The atmosphere was charged with that moral electricity which is as fatally premonitory of a row, as physical electricity is of a thunderstorm. The strangers' galleries were crowded to bursting. In the Ambassadors' tribune the whole feminine contingent of the Corps Diplomatique were at their posts armed with opera-glasses. In the journalists' box, originally designed to hold thirty, five-and-fifty wretched men of letters were sitting on each other's laps, crouching over each other's shoulders, and staving-in each other's ribs. In the Senators' tribune a fine collection of the Bubblewitz party were mustered; and these venerable conscript fathers being for the most part deaf, or stricken with lumbago, or afflicted with gout, looked much like a 'bus-full of patients from the Hospital of Incurables. Naturally the Government benches were full. The Prime Minister was in his place, biting his lips and defiant, like all men who are not quite pleased with themselves; next him, Baron Nichtsthun, gazing apprehensively at his bugbear Rothwein, and wondering whether that man would ever die; further on, the Ministers Pinteflasch, Mangel-Wurzel and Kalbsbraten, and the General Boum, who, by the way, was a fixture in the Cabinet, having sat therein under Bubblewitz, and having no intention of resigning, no matter who might be at the head of the Ministry or what might be his opinions. The only Ministerial seat left unoccupied was that of the honest Herr Butterkopf, Minister for Public Expenses. As this Minister was usually one of the first in his seat, his absence was soon remarked; but we shall see presently what was the cause of it.

No time was lost in useless parleying. The members were hardly settled down in their places than the Deputy Rothwein rose from his seat on the extreme left of the President, and cried in a vibrating voice which rang through the building: "I desire to question the Government as to the significance of the strange document with which we have been favoured this morning. I should like to know what it means. Is it a trap, or is it merely a practical joke?" (*Loud explosion of murmurs on the benches occupied by the Deputies* Weissnicht, Gehtnicht, Spinach, *and* Kartofeln. "*Hear, hear,*" *on those occupied by the Deputies* Stecknadel, Bockbier *and* Rindfleisch, *supporters of* Rothwein.)*

His Excellency Count von Tost und Wasser (*rising and speaking with vehemence*). I protest against the terms just employed. It is Herr Rothwein's language, and not our gracious Duke's soul-stirring proclamation, which deserves to be laughed at and treated with contumely. (*Loud cheers on the Right; exclamations and confusion on the Left.*)

* For greater accuracy's sake, we here quote the parliamentary report which was published in the *Paradoxische Zeitung* and other Gazettes on the following day.

Herr Rothwein. If the Prime Minister thinks to insult me, I beg to tell him that he and his words are beneath contempt. (*Cries of "Order, order."* His Excellency General Boum *starts up and utters some words which are inaudible in the tumult. His colleagues pull him back by the coat-tails.*)

His Excellency President Knipper. Herr Rothwein, I call you to order; your words are unparliamentary.

Herr Rothwein. So were his.

The Deputies Stecknadel, Bockbier, *and* Rindfleisch (*all speaking together*). Why don't you call the Prime Minister to order? It was he who began——

The Deputies Weissnicht, Gehtnicht, *and* Kartofeln. No, it wasn't.

The President. If the Prime Minister had said anything disrespectful towards you I should have requested him to withdraw it. But I heard nothing.

A Voice from one of the Galleries. The Herr President is deaf with one ear; he only hears the unpleasant things that are said on the Left of him. (*Hilarity on the Left benches; confusion on the Right. Cries of "Turn him out!"*)

The President (*hotly*). If this indecent interruption is repeated, I shall have the galleries cleared.

Herr Kartofeln. I am sure it came from the Journalists' box. Those men are lost to all shame.

The Deputies Weissnicht *and* Gehtnicht. Hear, hear.

At this moment an incident occurred which for a few minutes suspended the debate and gave a new turn to the proceedings. His Excellency Herr Butterkopf suddenly entered, but instead of going to his seat on the Ministerial benches, returned to the place he formerly occupied as simple Deputy. Sensation throughout the whole house. The strangers in the galleries lean out of their boxes the better to contemplate the honourable gentleman. Excitement amongst the journalists. Herr Butterkopf, feeling the eyes of everybody fixed on him, grows red and makes use of his handkerchief.

His Excellency the Prime Minister (*with emotion*). I had intended informing the House, had not the uncalled-for attack of Herr Rothwein diverted me from my purpose, that my colleagues and I have been unfortunately deprived of the co-operation of Herr Butterkopf. We deeply regret the circumstance; but it is a consolation to be able to assure you that the separation is due to no difference of opinion, Herr Butterkopf continuing as enthusiastic an admirer of our policy to-day as he was a valorous exponent of it yesterday. (*Cheers on the Right; expressions of doubt in the Centre; murmurs of incredulity on the Left, with cries of "Why did he resign, then?"*)

Herr Butterkopf (*nervously*). I am deeply—a—deeply touched at the kind way in which the House and—a—the Prime Minister have mentioned my name. I resigned—that is, I felt—a—bound to resign, because

—because— (*Noise on the Right.* Herr Butterkopf *is set upon by six or seven members of the Right, who shake him warmly by the hand, but prevent him continuing his explanations.*)

Herr Rothwein (*springing to the rostrum*). You resigned because you were an honest man, and wished to keep true to your principles; and that is the reason why your voice is being stifled by those honourable Ministerialists up there. (*Protestations.* "*Order, order.*") Oh, yes, Order, order. I am used to that cry. You may drown the voice of Herr Butterkopf, but you won't drown mine. Bang away with your desks, rattle away with your paper-knives; I've stood up to have my say, and I'll have it. Here in my hand I've got the proclamation of our Grand Duke Rodolphus, and I've risen to ask you what it means? Three months ago we saw a new Ministry come into office. Most of you cheered at the event. I didn't; for my experience of new Ministries is that they are so exactly like the old ones, that it is a waste of time to rejoice at changes. Well, like new brooms at work, the Ministers began fairly; I will even do them this justice, that they did all they could, considering that every reform had, as it were, to be wrested out of the jowl of the crowned Cerberus who—— (*Violent interruption. Prolonged cries of* "*Order.*" His Excellency General Boum *is with difficulty restrained from rushing towards the rostrum with his paper-cutter.*)

The President. Every well-conditioned mind will learn with loathing and abhorrence that the term *jowl* has been applied by a member of this House to the august lips of the Prince whom Providence and the national will have appointed to rule over Gerolstein. Herr Rothwein, I call upon you to retract. (*Loud cheers on the Right.*)

Herr Rothwein. I have no particular predilection for the word *jowl*: let us say *jaws*. (*Uproar*).

His Excellency General Boum (*amidst continued uproar*). He said Crowned Cerberus.

Herr Rothwein. I said "Crowned Socrates," not "Crowned Cerberus." ("*Oh, oh!*" *and laughter on the Left.*) However, that is beside the question. The person at the head of his Highness's Government understood perfectly what I meant. When he and his colleagues came into power they gave out, amidst universal rejoicings, that they were going to do great wonders; but here have we been sitting nearly five months and what *have* they done? Nothing but make speeches—*vox et præterea nihil.*

Herr Kartofeln (*indignantly*). I rise to order. Herr Rothwein has called the Prime Minister an ox of the Nile. (*Sensation—uproar.* His Excellency Herr Pinteflasch, Minister of Public Instruction, *jumps up and explains in a whisper to the hon. member that* vox et præterea nihil *is a Latin quotation*).

The Deputies Weissnicht and Gehtnicht (*who have not heard the explanation*). What business has he to insult the deputies of the nation in Greek?

Herr von Spinach. I protest against Hebrew quotations.

From this moment and for the next half-hour the speech of Herr Rothwein becomes inaudible. The ninety members of the Right acting in cordial unison, pound on the floor with their heels, bang the lids of their desks up and down, and beat a *rataplan* with their paper-knives. The hundred and sixty members of the Centre expostulate fiercely, and only succeed in adding to the tumult. The forty members of the Left stand up and roar out invectives, to the alarm of the visitors in the gallery and the exasperation of General Boum, who proffers terrible menaces, and has to be held down in his seat by four of his strongest colleagues. The Herr President, who has caught hold of his hand-bell and is brandishing it convulsively, rises repeatedly to order, but remains unheeded. When Herr Rothwein's voice is heard again, it has become cracked and sounds like a pair of bellows. The hon. member is black in the face, his hair is dishevelled, he is shaking both fists together at his opponents, and is saying furiously:—"But our time will come, no fear. You ask us why we oppose you systematically, why we keep aloof from you? We do it because we don't believe in you. The water of a stream will not run clear if the source itself is polluted. A double-dealing Sovereign makes shuffling Ministers, and shuffling Ministers make tricky laws. Why did you not resign like your colleagues? You are not simpletons, you must see that your power is a farce; that your Duke has no intention of letting you do as you please, and that, on the day when you try to encroach on his power, he will crush you like nutshells. What is the meaning of this new appeal to the people? is there a single grain of honest, plain-dealing motive in it? Why, the terms in which it is drawn up show you it is a mere catch, like everything else that Rodolphus has ever imagined. Whichever way the people vote, you will draw a conclusion favourable to yourselves. If we say 'Yes,' you will infer that we have confidence in your Duke; if we say 'No,' you will exclaim: 'Ah! it is not the Duke they are opposed to, but the new reforms.' And what do you think the peasantry know of the question you are going to ask? During eighteen years you have laid thought under an interdict, gagged free speech, and sent journalists to prison; nine-tenths of our peasantry could not so much as tell you what a Constitution is. What value can you attach to their opinions? How are they to discover that the pretended reforms, of which you boast so loudly, are mere hovels built on sand, which your Duke may knock over any minute? How are they to see that it is not this or that Minister, or this or that law, which stands in the way of serious reform, but the chief of the State himself, who is a greybeard, and not of an age when men put themselves to school to unlearn the principles that have actuated their whole lives? Mark my words, O Gerolsteiners! an old eagle does not take kindly to chickweed. Try as you will to domesticate him, he still keeps his claws and his beak, and you learn to your cost, if you attempt to chain him to his perch, what it is to be over-trustful. And now run

off to your polling-booths and vote 'Yes' to this Plebiscitum. Vote 'Yes,' and make your Grand Duke laugh in his sleeve; vote 'Yes,' and please those innocent Ministers who will wear the 'Yes' as proudly round their necks as pet-dogs do their dog-collars; vote 'Yes,' and prove once more that you are the same intelligent people you always were, dancing to any tune your ducal piper chose to play, and barking to anybody who held up a bone to you, without looking to see if there was any meat on it."

This deplorable speech, the impious and disloyal tone of which was heightened tenfold by the gestures with which it was delivered, brought down, as it justly deserved, the wrath of the whole Assembly of Gerolstein on the speaker. Never had been seen such audacity in the memory of living man. The Deputy Kartofeln, crimson with wrath, had loosened his necktie in dread of apoplexy. The Deputies Weissnicht and Gehtnicht, and twenty-three others, worn out with banging their desks, were leaning back in their seats and gasping "Turn him out!" The Deputy Von Spinach and fourteen beside him sat petrified with horror. Even the benign Herr Milchbrod, and with him a large party of the Centre who were of his way of thinking, admitted that such subversive sentiments could not possibly be tolerated, and that it was the duty of all loyal subjects to strengthen the hands of Government, in order that the Duchy of Gerolstein might not become a prey to anarchy. By general consent of his party, Herr Milchbrod rose to his legs to give utterance to these views. He said, amidst loud cheers, "that he had had doubts as to the Plebiscitum, but that these doubts had now been for ever dispelled by the speech—the shameless speech" (*great cheering*) "which he had just heard. Henceforth, it was obvious to him, as it no doubt was to every other well-thinking mind, that the tide of democracy was threatening the basis of the social edifice" (*applause*), "that the cankerworm of communism was gnawing at the very vitals of the monarchical principle" (*sensation*), "that everything that pestilential doctrines could do to poison the current of the national intellect, was being attempted; and that, consequently, those who had any belief in the immortal traditions of religion, or felt the smallest veneration for the sanctity of the domestic hearth, must proclaim a truce to political differences and put their whole faith in Tost und Wasser." When the cheering which followed this remarkable oration had subsided, his Excellency the Prime Minister rose amidst prolonged acclamations; and, mounting the steps of the rostrum, pronounced this thrilling harangue,—

"I thank the Hon. Herr Milchbrod for his patriotic words. Yes, Herr Milchbrod has struck upon the chord of truth; he has stated the case as it stands, placing it in the crude light of hideous reality, neither attenuating nor exaggerating anything. We have been much maligned, gentlemen—I may say cruelly maligned" (*murmurs of sympathy on the Ministerial benches, and looks of indignation at the Deputies* Rothwein, Stecknadel, Bockbier, *and* Rindfleisch), "but we forgive our enemies" (*cries of admiration*), "yes, we forgive them; but in their own interests

we will follow them up and exterminate them pitilessly" (*enthusiastic cheering*). "What do they want, these men who pretend to be Liberals and yet come here and revile the most Liberal act that has ever been accomplished? Their zeal on behalf of the people is all a make-believe, their democratic fervour a pretence. You heard how the Deputy Rothwein spoke of our peasantry, that intelligent peasantry which tills our fields and grows the bread which is to nourish us!" (*Emotion.*) "Is there a single member on this side of the House who would speak of those useful and honest agriculturists as the Liberal Herr Rothwein has done?" ("*No, no,*" *from the Deputies* WEISSNICHT, GEHTNICHT, *and* KARTOFELN.) "Our peasants have been libelled, gentlemen; they are full of good sense and loyalty, and the best proof of their intelligence is, that they will vote as we tell them on the occasion of the coming Plebiscitum. I should have too much to say were I to attempt refuting in detail all the absurd accusations of Herr Rothwein. I scorn such accusations, and so do my colleagues. We have been Liberal all our lives and Liberal we shall continue to be. There will be no coercion about this Plebiscitum; everybody will be free to discuss it as he pleases, and the police will have strict orders not to interfere with anybody, except those who vote against us or who subscribe money for our opponents. The soldiers of Gerolstein, too, will be called upon to vote; but, in order that matters may be managed fairly, and that no perfidious counsels may be whispered into the ears of our brave defenders by factious revolutionists, my honourable and gallant friend, General Boum, will see that every soldier is marched to the polling-booth with an affirmative ticket in his hand; and, I need scarcely add, that any person seen distributing tickets with '*No*' on them to the soldiers, will be most promptly and energetically dealt with." (*Cries of "Nothing can be fairer." Loud cheers.*) "The press will continue to be as free as it has hitherto been, and every encouragement and facility for sale will be afforded to those papers which agree with us; but, as no Government can be expected to put up with unprovoked assaults, no mercy will be extended to those organs which propagate views in opposition to ours." (*Renewed cheering.*) "I have only to add that the appeal to the people has been decided on in order that the nation might have a signal opportunity of expressing in all liberty its loathing for assassins."

Herr ROTHWEIN (*excitedly*). Whom do you mean by assassins?

His Excellency the PRIME MINISTER (*with calm*). Did I call you an assassin?

Herr ROTHWEIN. I ask you whom you mean by assassins?

His Excellency the PRIME MINISTER. This House will bear me witness that I have carefully avoided using any expression that the most sensitive person might disapprove, but since Herr Rothwein compels me to speak in plain terms, I will no longer conceal that the Government have this very morning obtained information of a plot of the darkest kind directed against the life of our cherished Grand Duke. (*Exclamations; interruptions on the Left; marks of surprise and indignation on the Right.*) Yes,

gentlemen, an "individual,"—a fiend in human shape—was caught wandering this morning in the Ducal park (*emotion*), with a ginger-beer bottle in his pocket (*prolonged sensation*); and the confession subsequently made by this individual tends to show that he had contemplated the fell design of letting fly the cork of his bottle from behind a bush whilst the Grand Duke was out walking (*thrill of horror, renewed emotion*). Nay, more, gentlemen, a copy of a newspaper was found in the pocket of the assassin (*great excitement*), and it is my duty to state that this print,—this guilty print, from which the murderer had evidently drawn his inspirations, was none other than the *Volk's Zeitung*, the organ of Herr Rothwein! (*Uproars, yells of execration. Herr* Rothwein *stands up and endeavours, without success, to make himself heard. A scene of indescribable confusion follows his attempt. Cries of "Regicide!" "Villain!" are heard on all sides.*)

The President. Herr Rothwein, when a man has such a load on his conscience as you must have, the best thing he can do is to keep silent.

Herr Rothwein stands up and gesticulates, but his words are again drowned in a unanimous clamour of indignation.

His Excellency the Prime Minister. Justification can be of no avail. The moral complicity of the Rothwein party with the assassin must be apparent to all; and I trust that the disgust and abhorrence which this plot will everywhere excite, will act as a warning to those who believe that there can be any hope of peace and prosperity for Gerolstein except in the stability of the present Ministry, and a cheerful acquiescence in all the measures which Rodolphus III. and his advisers may think good to propose.

Enthusiastic and prolonged ovation. Treble salvo of applause. His Excellency on descending from the rostrum is surrounded by 250 Deputies, who insist upon shaking him by the hand, and assuring him of their esteem. The sitting is soon after adjourned, and the whole House, President, Ministers, and Deputies — with the exception of the forty members of the Rothwein party—thereupon start off processionally for the Ducal palace, to present an address to the Sovereign in testimony of their joy at his escape from the hand of an assassin, and of their abomination for "the revolutionary cankerworm which is gnawing at the vitals of the monarchy."

IV.

Some twenty days after this debate the great appeal to the people was over; and his Serene Highness the Grand Duke was occupied in receiving the congratulations of his friends on the signal majority he had obtained. All the Gerolsteiners who disliked the cankerworm of revolution, or were afraid of ginger-beer bottles, or had an instinctive feeling of antipathy for the Hydra of Anarchy, had gone bravely to the poll and voted "Yes." As for those who had voted "No," they were of course all brigands and assassins,—men with no consciences, evilly disposed towards constituted authorities, and with no respect for the sanctity of the domestic hearth.

That more than one man out of every five hundred understood the full significance of the vote he gave, nobody—not even the Grand Duke—pretended to believe; but this was of no matter whatever. Votes are not weighed in Gerolstein. The opinion of any individual who fancies that the Hydra of Anarchy is a thing on four paws, that is to be met with after nightfall, is of quite as much value as that of an Archbishop or a Cabinet Minister, who knew that the said Hydra is a bogey. Thus, much laughter was excited at the palace by the news that in certain rural constituencies the intelligent rustics had gone to the poll under the impression that *Yes* was a gentleman of generous mind, devoted to the agricultural interests, whilst *No* was a dangerous socialist who had cast a covetous eye on the peasants' fields,—meditated confiscation by force. The bumpkins voted for "Yes" to a man, and loudly expressed their regret that Mr. No had not favoured them with a visit, in order that they might have treated him to a little of their minds. In another district it was widely reported that Yes or No were two answers to the inquiry, "Should the taxes be diminished?" and it seems that taxes must have been no more popular in that constituency than elsewhere, for when the urns were opened the delighted Burgomaster found that all the tickets without exception bore "Yes," and even in some cases two "Yeses."

On the evening of the day when the vote was made officially known to him at the palace, and when the Cabinet, the Corps Diplomatique, the Senate, the House of Deputies, and a great variety of officials in gaudy raiment had retired, after bowing to his Serene Highness the Grand Duke, and making their obeisance to her Serene Highness the Grand Duchess; towards night, when the Ducal lamplighters had commenced their avocations, and the Ducal cooks were dishing up the serene dinner, a modest brougham pulled up at one of the private doors of the palace, and a bald-headed personage got out. It was his Excellency the ex-Minister Bubblewitz. Anybody who had seen this distinguished statesman a few weeks before would have been astonished to see the beatific expression that animated his features now. He had grown almost as fat again as when he was in office, which is saying a great deal, for on the day he surrendered his seals he had begun to thin, and in the course of two months had grown so lean as to become an object of compassion to his acquaintance. On getting out of his brougham he made a question to the Ducal usher-in-waiting, which sounded uncommonly like, "Is the coast clear?" To which the usher at once responded, with an almost imperceptible contraction of the left eyelid, "Yes, your Excellency. There is no danger of meeting the Count; he went away ten minutes ago."

The statesman Bubblewitz strode up the grand staircase two steps at a time, for he appeared to be in possession of his best legs as well as his best looks; and on the first landing gave the usher a two-ducat piece, which was a piece of liberality to which the other did not seem accustomed. Instead of going towards the state apartments, Bubblewitz made, without hesitation, for a side-passage, at the end of which was a back stair

and a private door. Arrived at the private door, he knocked, and the next minute was standing in the presence of the Duke and Duchess, who were probably expecting him, for they nodded confidentially, and held out their hands, saying, "We are glad to see you, Herr Bubblewitz."

"Oh, Highness, how can I express my delight at your success!" exclaimed the statesman, exultingly.

"Your loyal sentiments do you honour, Herr Bubblewitz," replied the Duke, with benevolence.

"I am sure Herr Bubblewitz is much more loyal than the new Minister," remarked her Serene Highness, with a pout on her pretty lips. "Herr Bubblewitz always let me come to the Cabinet Councils, and Count von Tost und Wasser never does. Besides, it was Herr Bubblewitz who put the idea of the proclamation into our heads, and discovered all about the ginger-beer bottle."

"Yes, my dear," observed Rodolphus III.; "we are all grateful to Bubblewitz."

"I am sure I always do my best," pleaded that amiable statesman, affected to tears. "I never miss an occasion of turning my little talents to good account for your use, and—and, your Highness, you never heard me utter a word of reproach when—booh-ooh!—when—you turned me out of my place a few months ago." Here the faithful Bubblewitz was so overcome, that the tears coursed each other down his noble cheeks, and he had to be comforted with glasses of wine and kind words.

"There, he mustn't be melancholy," said the Grand Duchess, patting his venerable back, and coaxing him to imbibe a third glass of liquid. "He *shall* have his seals back again, that he shall. They shall make a place for him in the Tost und Wasser Cabinet, and if ill-natured, unkind Tost und Wasser won't, then they shall turn out Tost und Wasser—*there!*"

"I beg pardon!" interrupted a voice, which suddenly sounded in Bubblewitz's ear like a pistol-shot, and made him spill half his wine over his waistcoat. "I beg pardon!" and his arch-rival, Tost und Wasser, stood in the room.

His Serene Highness Rodolphus III. turned slightly blue, and her Serene Highness the Duchess Iphigenia became red as a blush-rose.

"I beg your Highness's pardon," repeated Count von Tost und Wasser, "but in going away from this room, twenty minutes ago, I forgot something!" and he picked up his portfolio, which was lying on the sofa.

"Shall I help your Excellency to carry it?" cried Bubblewitz, rushing forward obsequiously; and he added, half aloud, with a sigh, "If the portfolio was mine, it's not likely *I* should ever forget it."

"Patience!" said the Duchess, in a whisper.

Marathon and its Brigands.

The trip from Athens to Marathon is no joke, especially in summer, and when brigands are known to be sauntering unmolested along Mount Parnes, a night's walk away. Yet when G—— and C——, officials of two great Christian Governments, escaped from Constantinople for a holiday, and stirred me out of my hot quarters at Athens to show them the lions, &c., of course it became necessary to put this excursion in the programme. It was in August of last year, 1869, and we knew that there were brigands at Phylæ, and did not know that they were not nearer. In fact, the people of Athens were so panic-stricken that they would not go into the outskirts of the town in the evening; it was clear to the popular apprehension that we were besieged, and that the *roi des brigands*, whoever he might be for the time, was ruler of all the country round.

So, as our trip was to be in the nature of an invasion of an enemy's country, I decided to make it a surprise, and, with strict injunctions of secresy on all around, went, at nightfall of the day before we were to make the excursion, to the *Commandant de place* and asked an escort—"not that there was any use in it, but the strangers were anxious," &c. The Commandant stroked his moustache, expressed his sense of the high honour of having been permitted to make my acquaintance, offered me a cigarette, and we talked European politics, the Cretan insurrection, &c.; he assured me, as I rose to take my leave, that an escort of cavalry should be waiting at my door at 5 A.M. the next day. I went thence to the owner of horses and carriages and ordered a carriage for the above hour, and a relay of horses to be sent forward at once to the half-way station. I knew that if, even then, one of the friends of the brigands in town (by force of circumstances I should have said the carriage-owner, if I had been pressed to select one) should send word to his colleagues that four distinguished foreigners, of whom two certainly were ambassadors, were to start for Marathon on the morrow, they would not get the news before morning, and would not dare cross the plain by day, so that we could reach Athens again before they could get upon our road.

I awoke with the grey dawn and heard the hoofs of the troopers' horses clattering on the pavement in front of the house, and, running over to the hotel, found my friends wasting the precious coolness in deliberate breakfast. I inspected the horses, bullied the driver for having brought us the shabbiest carriage in Athens (by way of cutting down in advance his claim for backsheesh, or extra pay on any score), interjected a little Western celerity into the Eastern combination, and we started, picking

up the escort *en route*. The road (that which conducts to Chalcis) is very good for a few miles, and we rattled along until we had passed Hymettus and emerged on the plains which slope towards Eubœa, when we turned sharp off by a bad waggon-track, rather than carriage-road, through the olive-orchards, and then through a pine-forest as solitary as the backwoods of America. No habitation, man, or grazing beast even, was to be seen; no tinkle of goat-bells to be heard. In the midst of this forest, by the side of a brook, seeming at first sight a succession of stagnant pools, bordered by a luxuriant growth of blackberries, oleanders, and rich grass, we found our relay waiting. There was no delay in changing, and about 10 A.M. we emerged from the wood on the marsh-bordered plain of Marathon.

The blue sea now breaks farther out than when the Persian keels fretted it and marked the sand that now lies hundreds of feet inland; and many acres of the marsh, where, doubtless, Persian bones and Persian trophies are bedded to this day, are now solid earth. We drove up to the mound through the maize-fields, and between the strips of vineyard, where the villagers of New Marathon were watching the early grapes; and having climbed the mound, made its circuit, and hunted for fragments of flint instruments, which form one of the items of interest at Marathon, we bought of the patriarch of the adjoining fields—who sat under a shelter of reeds guarding his riches, lest they took to themselves wings—a supply of water-melons, scarcely ripe grapes, and cantaloupes; each trooper confiscating one of the former, and quenching his thirst in the saddle. Then, having listened to the guide's tale of the battle, oft told, and ever growing in wondrous inequalities of heroism and butchery; and looked where he told us (and Murray, ever-to-be-consulted, confirmed,) that the Greeks held their position and the Persians landed: having, in short, "done" the place after the manner of the guidebook-led tourist, we drove back to the edge of the forest for shelter from the intense sun while we lunched.

I think that "timeo Danaos" must be one of the things birched into us at school, for, with an immense liking for the race, I have an instinctive distrust of the preternatural shrewdness of the true Achaian, and our driver was of the genuine type, and had an uncanny way of looking across the bridge of his nose towards the mountains, which made me uneasy.

However, we lunched, drank copiously of good wine of Phalerum, while the driver pottered about his carriage and horses, to such good purpose that, when finally we started on the home road, we had not gone half a mile before the carriage came to a standstill, out of order. One of the wheels refused to revolve. Nothing was broken, so far as could be seen; but no efforts of all the persons concerned could make the wheel turn, or get it off its axle. The ever-to-be-suspected citizen of Athens begged us, with much serenity, to compose and assure ourselves, and be comfortable while he sent to Athens for another carriage. My misgivings coming to a head very rapidly, I asked him when the carriage would arrive; and he

replied, in the happiest and most confident tone, that he *hoped* that it would get there by nightfall. "Very well," said I, "we will go and send it." Unhitching the horses, and dismounting two of the troopers, we rode back to the relay post at the little bridge, where the recently murdered Englishmen were captured, and there halted to wait for one of the dismounted men, who had been charged with a photographic camera, and had not kept up with us. Meanwhile, one of the soldiers rode on to the next hamlet to see if some kind of trap could not be obtained; for, between foot-weariness and saddle-soreness, we were all desirous to change our method of locomotion. Our escort was thus diminished to two—the corporal and one private. The place was a capital one for an ambush, as the capturers of Lord Muncaster's party found it, and I looked into the thick trees growing each side of the brook on the bank overlooking it, and in the bed of it above us, with a certain nervousness, which increased when, after half-an-hour's waiting, the remaining trooper was sent back to look for the missing camera and its bearer.

There was nothing for it, however, but to wait till the escort reassembled; and we lit our cigarettes and lay down under the pine-trees. A circumstance that assured me somewhat was, that I found the troopers' carbines all unloaded (they were old-fashioned flint-lock smooth-bores), from which I saw that they at least anticipated no danger. The corporal was a jolly, good-humoured veteran, whose air was that of a man ready for any emergency or danger. I asked him if he thought there was any ground for fear that, if we were obliged to wait long there, we might be carried off by some of the country-people, brigands *pro tempore?* He replied with the significant Greek negative, a silent pointing upward of the nose, accompanied by a slight arching of the brows, and, after another puff or two at his cigarette, said: "No; we know all the brigands, and generally know where they are. They could not stay here twenty-four hours without our knowing it, and we know that there have been none on this side of Pentelicus for months. The common people here," he added, "are very honest and quiet, but very poor."

"Perhaps," ejaculated M——, "the one because the other—put whichever you please as cause or effect in this country."

"I was a brigand myself once," said the corporal, after the pause in the conversation had lasted a few minutes; whereupon we all looked at him anew, and with a little more animation; and he added, as if in partial disclaimer, "but it was only for a few months."

"But how did it happen?" I asked; for though I knew that there had been brigands in the Cabinet in Greece, I did not suppose that the post of corporal in the mounted gendarmerie was a temptation to a gay rover who had felt the delight of outlawry.

"It was in this way," replied he. "I used to live in Acarnania, and, in one of the elections, there was a gentleman who had great influence in two or three of the villages, and who came from Athens to help the other side; and, as we knew that if these villages went against us we should

lose the election, it was necessary to get rid of him. The chiefs of our party tried to draw him over to us; but, as he would not come, we had to get up a quarrel in the street, and he was killed. I was one of those who made the fight. I did not strike a blow, but ran with the others to the mountains to wait till it all could be made right again. But, in spite of everything, the other side got the election and so we could not go back. If our men had been elected we should have been pardoned. So we went up to the Phthiotide and joined a band there, three of us; I stayed two years before I had a chance of getting back, and that was in the beginning of the Cretan insurrection, when many of the bands went over to fight with the Turks. When I did get back they made me corporal, as you see me; and, when there is any necessity to hunt the brigands, I generally go with the expedition, for I know all the roads. But this Government don't trouble them much. You see, General Soutzo, the Minister of War, has got an estate up in the brigands' country, and he knows very well that if he troubles them too much it will be plundered; and then it's no use running after them, for the moment an expedition starts they all go to the frontier, and are ready to cross over and get Turkish protection; and there are always some Turkish subjects in the bands, who make it all right with the guards."

"Did you ever make any prizes while you were in the band?" I asked.

"No great gentlemen; only a few Wallachian and Bulgarian merchants. The bands don't like to trouble Franks, unless it is a lord or some very rich man who can pay a big ransom, for the affair makes so much more trouble when it is a Frank, and they get pursued and have to leave their families for a long time: and it don't do," he ejaculated, with a shrug.

"But have they families with them?" I asked.

"Perhaps," suggested C——, "they have as many as they have hiding-places."

The corporal's nose went up in the air with a quiet expression of his evident feeling that we did not in the least understand the respectability of the kleptic calling, as he replied, "No; they always stay near their families, except when the expeditions are out, and get their supplies from their relations. You must know that when Comoundouros was First Minister, there were some bands in the Morea, and the nomarch of Argos, the same who caught Kitzos, sent all the families of the brigands over to the islands, and they had to come in and surrender in a few weeks; all but one band near Patras, and they would have come too, if Bulgaris had not come in First Minister, and sent the nomarch away, because they said he violated the Constitution. That is what makes the country so poor, this changing the Ministers all the time; and the King, he's of no use, only costs thirty million drachmas a year;" and the politician born shrugged his shoulders with an expression of contempt for such a state of things. He proceeded, however, after a moment:—"The chiefs never allow the members of their bands to marry or steal women if they

are already married, because it always makes trouble, and the women betray the bands to punish them. One of our band one day stole a very pretty girl from a village near Lamia; and when the chief ordered him to take her back, and he refused and threatened to leave the band, the chief shot him dead, and sent the girl home. Her father paid us well by giving information of a rich Bulgarian wool-merchant, who was buying wool in the mountains near Lamia, and we carried him off, and got twenty thousand drachmas ransom. That was the best capture we made while I was in the band. We tried to catch an English lord once who was going over to the Eubœa; but some of the people told Mr. Noel, an English gentleman who lives at Achmet Aga, and he sent the lord warning."

"How did you know he was a lord?" I asked.

"Oh, one of the band had a cousin who was a waiter in the hotel where the lord lived, and he sent us word that he was coming, and that he had so much money that he did not know how to spend it; for he bought all kinds of antiquities for whatever price people asked him, and gave backsheesh like a fool. If we had caught him we should have made him pay ten thousand pounds ransom, and then we should have gone over the frontier and bought property in Epirus, and become Turkish subjects. Ten thousand pounds is a good deal of money," he appended, by way of reflection.

Here he got up and walked across the bridge to the brink of the opposite bank, and listened if he could catch any sound of the horse of the trooper sent after the missing footman. Nothing. What could the matter be? Had they both been gobbled up by the brigands? Their fire-arms, I knew, were not loaded, and they could not even fire a shot of warning for us. There was, however, nothing to do but wait; and wait we did. The troopers' saddles were very bad; one of the party was no horseman, and was already both footsore and saddle-sore, for we had come twelve miles since the break-down; another was a cripple,—and to get back to Athens afoot was, therefore, to two of us impossible. Then we had only three available horses: the corporal being too portly and equestrian to get home afoot, two of the gendarmes being away with their horses, and the keeper of the relay having started for Athens on one of his spare beasts to hurry up the other carriage. Of the remaining three, none had saddles; and the two which had brought us from Marathon were thoroughly jaded. We had ten or twelve miles still to go, and the prospect was not a pleasant one.

Presently the trooper who had been sent back came clattering along with the news that the missing comrade was not to be found. He had ridden back to the carriage, and found no trace of him on the road. The other, sent after a vehicle, had not returned, and it was now nearly mid-afternoon. We all grew nervous and irritable, and I confidently expected to see the dirty fustanella appear in the bushes around. C—— began, in Stamboul Greek, with strong English accent, to abuse the Government and Greece in general, to which the corporal replied imperturbably, for

the Greeks are too much in the habit of hearing their State berated to think much about it; and it sometimes occurs to me that, as they do really, in general, receive more abuse than they deserve, it may have had the effect of diminishing the self-respect which man or nation must possess, to win the respect of others. So the corporal re-echoed the epithets levelled at the Ministers, and abused the King, who, he said, might better matters if he were not so given up to his favourites. It is hard quarrelling with a man who takes your side in the quarrel, and we had to stop berating the government, as the corporal beat us out and out in virulence.

"But tell me, Stavros," said I, at length, "what would you do if you were Minister of War to put down brigandage?"

"Do!" replied he, the feather of imagination tickling his importance so that he became really ministerial in dignity. "I would very soon stop it. I would make the villages pay all the ransoms which were taken in their territory. I would do as the nomarch of Argos did, and send the families of all the brigands out to live in the islands, and I would have all brigands shot as soon as taken, instead of being sent, as they are now, to the Palamidi, to wait for a new election, and then be pardoned to go into the provinces to make influence. But the Turkish Government must work with ours, or there cannot be an end to it. Why, not a year ago, when we were going to fight the Turks about the *Ennosis*, and Hobart Pacha went to Syra to take her, I was with an expedition to look at the boundary near Arta, and the brigands took two of our officers who slept in a village without sentinels, and carried them over the frontiers, and kept them in the Turkish guard-house for ransom, and the Turkish captain had part of the ransom. You might as well attempt to shut all the fish into Piræus harbour as to try to shut the brigands off from the boundary. If all the lazy regulars who live in the barracks of Athens, and do nothing but set guard at the palace and march about town, were put on the boundary, they wouldn't keep a man from passing when he liked. But they might watch the villagers, to keep the brigands from coming down to get bread or powder, or from capturing any one, and in time they would be starved out. But they must send the families away—that will stop them quicker than anything else."

"But," I said, "that is illegal—it's against the Constitution."

"Bah!" said the indignant soldier, "we hear of the Constitution when it serves the Ministers—never when it protects the people. The Constitution is like the middle of a fast*—you may do what you like with it. There are sixty brigands in chains now in the Palamidi, and I'll lay a wager that forty will be pardoned in a year, and yet the Constitution does not permit the pardoning of a brigand without the Chambers. I know fellows who have been released two or three times. It is all very

* The practice of many in Greece is to keep only the first and last weeks of the long fasts. Strict devotees keep the whole, 146 days of each year.

well to talk of constitutions and laws; but I think that Ministers make them for their own good, and keep them when they like. In my opinion the law that does the work is the law we want, and if I was Minister I would make law enough to do what I wanted. I know a butcher in Athens who has a brother a brigand in a band near Galaxidi, and he keeps the band informed of all people going there; and I suppose if we put him in prison, as he deserves, there would be a great talk about the Constitution; but, if I had my way, I would lock him up in the Palamidi, and his lawyers with him. Your Constitutions may be all very well in other countries, but——" and he finished by a thumb over his shoulder. "Constitution!" he ejaculated again, after a little, with a contemptuous shrug, as though his ideas had been rumbling away in some inner cavern, and had come out in an echo.

It grew late when the man sent in search of a vehicle returned, saying that nothing was to be found. The missing man must be abandoned, and we must push on as we could, hoping, on the high road, to fall in with some means of transport. The two gendarmes gave up their horses cheerfully in view of backsheesh, the two best of the carriage-horses bore the other two of us, and without other mishaps we journeyed along as far as the road, when at a half-fortified metochi, we found a butcher's cart, which, filled with straw and packed densely with the four of us, in addition to the guide and driver, served to bring us with much pain to Athens, where we arrived about 10 P.M. The missing gendarme was waiting at the metochi.

The next day, about sunset, I happened to meet the carriage returning, and had the curiosity to ask what was the matter.

"Only a nail, which had got between the axle and wheel, and would not let it turn."

"Ah!" I said, "how did the nail get there?"

The driver shrugged his shoulders with a bland smile, which might be understood to mean anything you pleased. *I* took it to mean that he knew when and why the nail got in; and, had I been Stavros' model Minister, I should certainly have sent him to the Palamidi forthwith.

A Clever Forgery.

The attention which has of late been called to literary forgeries induces us to lay before our readers some particulars of a case of imposture which, as regards the eminence of the author whose work was imitated; the skill of the imitator; the internal character of the forged document; the success of the fraud; the difficulty of discovery; and the mystery which even now hangs over the transaction, yields in interest to no recorded event of the kind. Moreover, the history is in a great measure new to this country. The forgery was committed in Germany eighty years ago, and it is above thirty years since it was detected and publicly exposed; but the work in question, which is very popular and has a large sale, is almost universally believed, here, to be the genuine production of the author whose name it bears.

The history applies, not to a literary, but to a musical document, which passes for one of the greatest works of one of the greatest composers of modern days.* The points of interest are, however, very analogous to those arising in cases of literary forgery.

In the latter part of the last century there resided, some twenty or thirty miles south of Vienna, a large landed proprietor named Count Wallsegg. At that time Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven were all busy in the Austrian capital; music was much cultivated, and it was no uncommon thing for a man of elevated rank to be also a learned and skilful musician. Count Wallsegg aimed at obtaining this character; he patronized music and musicians extensively, retained a band of his own, and produced for their performance creditable music from his own hand. In 1791 his Countess died, and he took the opportunity of combining his respect for her with the gratification of his ruling passion, by producing a new Requiem, to be performed in her memory. It was a pretentious composition for voices and instruments; the score in the Count's autograph is still in existence, and bears the following title:—

Requiem
Composto dal
Conte Wallsegg.

It was put in rehearsal and studied carefully; musicians were brought from Vienna to augment the orchestra, and at length, in 1792, it was

* The particulars here given are chiefly taken from a work published in Leipsic, in 1859, "*W. A. Mozart*, von Otto Jahn." The details more especially interesting to musicians may be found in a series of articles communicated to the *Musical Times* in 1869, by W. Pole, F.R.S., Mus. Doc., Oxon.

publicly performed. It was one of the finest works ever heard in that part of the country; it was repeated several times, and it procured the Count great fame.

About that time another death of an eminent person occurred in Vienna. The great Mozart, whose wonderful genius and talent as a composer were destined to place him, for all future time, at the summit of the musical art, departed this life, in the fulness of his powers, on the 5th December, 1791. His latest works had procured that recognition of his merits which had been denied to him in his early years, and some months after his death great interest was excited by the public performance of what was stated to be his last composition, described as

MISSA PRO DEFUNCTIS
(REQUIEM)
IN MUSIK GESETZT
VON
W. A. MOZART.

The hall was densely crowded, and the work was received with the greatest enthusiasm. It was quickly repeated in Leipsic and in other places; manuscript copies were bought at large prices by the sovereigns of Europe; and one of the most eminent musicians of the time wrote out a transcript, note for note, with his own hand, inscribing on the title-page, in letters an inch high, the words *Opus summum viri summi!*

Now, strange to say, the Requiem "composto" by Count Wallsegg, and the Requiem "in Musik gesetzt" by W. A. Mozart, were one and the same composition. And, stranger still, this Requiem was not composed by Count Wallsegg, for he was incapable of conceiving a bar of such music; nor was it written by Mozart, for it was not in existence at the time he died! The original score was a clever forgery of Mozart's handwriting, executed after his death, at the instance of his widow, by a young man whose name would never have come down to posterity had it not been for his connection with this transaction.

The circumstances under which this double imposture came about were as follows. The musical compositions which procured the Count Wallsegg so much credit, though given out by him as his own, were only so in the sense that a lady's hair, under the present fashion of coiffure, is her own; namely, because he *bought* them. It was his custom, when he wanted to produce a song, a quartett, or a symphony, to order it from some composer, whom he paid liberally, under the condition that he should be allowed to take the credit of the composition, the real authorship being strictly concealed. He did not himself appear in these transactions, but carried them on through secret agents, so that the authors themselves often did not know what became of their works. The Count did not publish his music; he appears to have been content with the fame derived from its performance under his direction; and though

some of his musicians strongly suspected that the style was above his capability, it was not their interest to expose him.

When the idea of performing a Requiem for his Countess occurred to him, he fixed on Mozart as the person to write it. It is said he had already had some transactions with this composer, but whether this was so or not, he knew well, not only that he was an able musician, but also that his circumstances were such as would incline him to fall in with the proposal. Accordingly a messenger was sent to Mozart in Vienna, to ask him if he would undertake the commission, on the condition of secrecy, and if so, what remuneration he would expect. He assented, naming a sum which the Count willingly paid in advance, promising to increase it considerably when the score was delivered to him.

Mozart's attention was at first called off by other pressing engagements; but on receiving, sometime afterwards, a reminder from the Count, he set to the work. He was then falling ill, and had a presentiment of his approaching decease, but he honourably endeavoured to perform his engagement. He commenced the composition, which was taken from him by his physicians, and again resumed; but before he had proceeded far with it, he was called "to that place where only his harmony could be excelled."

The widow, who was left in bad circumstances, felt greatly perplexed about the Requiem. She feared that if the person who had commissioned it came to know it was unfinished, he would demand the return of his money; and she therefore began to consider whether it would not be possible to evade such a liability. She had many friends among the composers of Vienna, and she hit upon the idea of asking some of them to complete the work, in such a manner that the whole might be passed off as her husband's; a measure by which she might not only retain the sum already received, but secure that which was to come. Several musicians were applied to in strict confidence, and at last a suitable person was found in a young man named Franz Xavier Süssmayer, a pupil of Mozart's, who had been much with him during the latter part of his life. He was a clever musician, and wrote some works that excited attention at the time; but he lived a dissipated life, and died before he could establish any enduring character as a composer.

Mozart had finished only one movement of the Requiem out of thirteen; he had made some progress with several others, but the last four or five he had not even begun. Süssmayer undertook to finish the incomplete portions, and to fill up those wanting by entirely new compositions of his own.

But he undertook more than this. The widow, though she did not know who the person was for whom the Requiem was intended, seems to have had a shrewd notion that some trouble might be caused by the work not being in the handwriting of her husband, which was peculiar and well known. To imitate this was almost as difficult a task as to fill up the wanting music; indeed, many persons who might have attempted the

latter would have been incapable of the former. Süssmayer, however, undertook both duties, and performed them both with equal skill and success. He took the first movement already existing in Mozart's hand, and having completed and composed the remainder, he copied the latter in such an exact imitation of Mozart's writing that, when bound up with the real autograph, no difference could be traced between them.

The score thus made up was then sent to the Count Wallsegg, who, doubtless recognizing the writing, suspected nothing, but re-copied the whole and gave it out for his own, secure in the belief that his secret would be preserved by the payment of his stipulated and handsome honorarium.

But in this belief he had reckoned without his host, or rather without his hostess; for the cunning widow, before parting with Süssmayer's score, had made a copy for herself, and this she determined to use, with very little scruple, for her own advantage.

A curious anecdote is related of a violin-maker, so skilful in his trade, that he could imitate an old violin to perfection. One day a fiddler, more eminent than honest, brought him a fine Cremona, and said, with a sly twinkle in his eye, "Mr.—— I want you to make me an exact copy of this Amati." The maker, who knew to whom the fiddle belonged and guessed the object, promised to have it ready in two months. At the end of the time the player came, paid the money and received the two violins; but when he got home, and examined them closely, he found they were *both* counterfeits, the clever imitator having kept the true Amati for himself.

So Madame Mozart was not content with a single imposture, she resolved not only to deceive Count Wallsegg, but to deceive the world also. She cared nothing for her husband's solemn pledge of secrecy, but determined at once to perform the Requiem under Mozart's name, and thus it became known to the public, as already described. No doubt the Count winced when he heard of the Vienna performance, but he was not in a position to complain, and though he remonstrated privately, at a later time, he did not interfere with the general circulation of the work. In 1800 the score was engraved for publication by a Leipsic firm, and in consequence of some reports that had reached them as to Süssmayer's connection with the Requiem, they applied to him for explanation. He admitted, in answer, that the work was partly his own composition; but though the firm published his letter, they discredited his claim, believing him incapable of composing music of so high a character; and for this reason they described the work as entirely Mozart's, without making any further allusion to Süssmayer.

Five-and-twenty years afterwards the question was again raised. An eminent critic named Gottfried Weber attacked the Requiem on internal grounds. He endeavoured to prove that the work could not be Mozart's, as it abounded with faults which it was impossible such a writer could commit. He attributed the composition mainly to Süssmayer, and cited the published letter from this young man as corroborative of the judgment

he had formed from the music itself. Weber's article stirred up a violent controversy, which lasted for two or three years, and in which many leading musicians took part; but owing to the silence of Madame Mozart, for obvious reasons, and to the reticence of her friends out of consideration for her, this left the question only where it was before. The composition had been warmly defended, and the general opinion was still adhered to, in spite of Weber's criticisms, that the work was really genuine.

In 1839 the true state of the matter was discovered, and the fraud detected, by the production of the original manuscript score, furnished in the first instance to Count Wallsegg. He had fortunately preserved it secretly in his library, and some years after his death it was discovered and identified, and was purchased by Count Moritz von Dietrichstein, for the Imperial Library at Vienna. The greatest interest was excited in the musical world by the acquisition, and an investigation of the evidence it afforded as to the authorship was at once set on foot. The proceedings on this inquiry form one of the strangest portions of the history; and we extract the following account of them from an official narrative published shortly afterwards by the keeper of the library.*

An inspection of the score gave at once the impression to every one who was acquainted with Mozart's writing, that it was entirely, from the first to the last leaf, written by his hand; from which it followed that he had really finished the work before his death, and that every report circulated, either in print or by tradition to the contrary, must be an error. This impression was confirmed by various other considerations, among which the elevated character of the whole of the music, and the reputation which, after all the attacks of Weber, and the testing of half a century, it had maintained, were important elements.

But it was felt that great caution ought to be exercised in admitting this opinion. It was true that manuscripts often had been, and still from time to time were discovered, which had been considered as lost, or the existence of which had never been suspected; but still, as evidence had been produced, at a former time, from good authority, tending to throw doubt on Mozart's alleged completion of the Requiem, it was decided that the apparent resemblance of the writing ought not to be trusted; but that, as a duty to the musical world, the manuscript ought to undergo the most searching examination and the severest tests that it was possible to apply.

The first test was by comparing the newly-found score with the original unfinished portions of the same work, which had undeniably proceeded from Mozart's hand. It must be explained that it was the widow's policy, in furtherance of her imposture, carefully to keep these out of sight. She would have been unscrupulous enough to destroy them, but her cupidity prevented this, as she hoped to make money by them.

* *Ueber die original Partitur des Requiem von W. A. Mozart.* Von I. F. Edlen von Mosel. Wien, 1839.

After some ineffectual attempts to dispose of them, under conditions of secrecy, to a publisher at Frankfort, she sold them piecemeal, in such a way as to render difficult their subsequent discovery. A good providence, however, foiled her intention, as they fortunately, after many vicissitudes, fell into the hands of persons who perceived their value, and placed them for safety in the Imperial Library.

The existence of these unquestionably genuine documents was not inconsistent with the possibility that Mozart, treating them as mere sketches, might have subsequently made a fair finished copy; but at the same time they served as an excellent test for the comparison of the newly-found manuscript, inasmuch as the whole of the contents of the former were—notes, signs, and words—literally transcribed into the latter. The comparison was made with great care, and the resemblance of the handwriting was found perfect in nearly all particulars.

But this comparison was not thought sufficient, and a wider investigation was set on foot. The authorities procured other undoubted manuscripts by Mozart, upwards of eighty in number, of all periods of his life, including some of his latest, corresponding to the date of the Requiem; and armed with these, a number of the most eminent musicians, and of those best acquainted with Mozart's writings, were invited to form a committee for the purpose of examining the new score and of pronouncing a judgment upon it.

The committee renewed, with the more copious materials, the careful comparison previously made; and the result was that the majority declared the new score to be positively in Mozart's handwriting, from its exact correspondence with his acknowledged manuscripts in all important parts, not only in the notes and the text, but also in the minor signs, such as the figuring added to the bass part, and so on. A comparison was also made with some autographs of Süssmayer's, and these were so essentially different as hardly to present the most distant likeness, many of the signs in them being of a totally different character.

The minority of the committee, while they admitted that the reasons in favour of the genuineness far outweighed any arguments that could be brought on the other side, stated, on being repeatedly pressed to do so, the following facts which they believed deserved further consideration :—

In the first place, the date 1792 was written under Mozart's name, whereas it was known that he died in the preceding year.

Secondly, some ungrammatical progressions were pointed out in a portion of the music, which it was not thought possible Mozart could have written.

Thirdly, a difference was found in the form of the signs for the naturals, which were among the most characteristic marks of Mozart's hand. In his acknowledged compositions they were uniformly formed with a closed square, narrower above than below, while in the Wallsegg score they were open squares, more like those of Süssmayer.

Fourthly, other differences were found in the capital letters B, P, Q, R, and T, which were not always like Mozart's usual forms.

Attention was also called to the fact that the differences mentioned under the third and fourth heads were only found in the second and following movements; in the first movement Mozart's usual forms were in all respects adhered to.

It was further remarked that the paging of the book was not consecutive, and that there was no intelligible reason why Mozart should have made a fresh copy, instead of filling in and completing the one he had already begun.

These remarks, which showed with what extraordinary care and conscientiousness the examination was made, were answered by the other side at considerable length and with much ingenuity.

In regard to the error in the date, it was argued that Mozart, working at the composition so late in the year, might well have assumed that it could not be completed till the beginning of the year after, and therefore might have purposely post-dated it. Or it might be merely a mistake, for, singularly enough, among the undoubted manuscripts used for comparison was a rondo for the Waldhorn, dated, in Mozart's hand, *Vienna, Venerdi Santo il* 6 *Aprile*, 1792; and as Good Friday happened to fall on April 6, 1791, the slip of the pen was evident, and might easily have been reproduced in the Requiem. Either of these explanations would be, it was urged, infinitely more reasonable than to suppose that anybody planning a deliberate forgery should commit such an absurdity as to append to the forged document a date subsequent to the professed author's death.

In regard to the ungrammatical progressions, it was pointed out that their effect was hidden by the disposition of the parts, and that they might easily have escaped the composer's attention, or might even have been admitted by him exceptionally, precedents for such passages being abundantly found in the works of Handel.

As to the form of the naturals, while it was admitted that the closed square was the most usual and characteristic form in Mozart's manuscripts, yet examples were shown where he had used the open form; and, by an odd coincidence, this form, exactly similar to that in the Wallsegg score, was exclusively found in the Waldhorn rondo before mentioned.

The answer as to the shape of the capital letters was not so forcible; but it was still found that the letter B existed in the test manuscripts in several shapes, some of which resembled those in the Requiem, and the useful Waldhorn composition again came in aid, as the R in the word "Rondo" of the title was of the exact Requiem form. The connection of this piece with the Requiem was one of the most curious things in the history, as it not only contained the exceptional similarities above noted, but it was composed for a person of the same name (Leutgeb) as the mysterious messenger sent by the Count to communicate with Mozart about the composition. The exact shapes of the other letters could not be positively identified in any of the Mozart manuscripts; but as a set-off against this, it was pointed out that the word *finis* on the last page of the

Requiem was as exact a facsimile of one undoubtedly written by Mozart in November, 1791, as if they had been both impressions from the same type. It was also remarked that certain little penmarks on the paper, having no obvious reference to the music, but probably done while the writer was thinking, were visible in the Requiem, precisely as they were in many of Mozart's acknowledged compositions.

In regard to the irregularity of the paging, and the alleged improbability of Mozart's having re-written the work instead of having filled up the former sketches, the testimony of the widow at a former time was brought to prove that he was irregular and careless in the arrangement of his papers, and that when a sketch was lost, he would often re-write it exactly as before (his memory being unfailing in this respect) rather than take the trouble to hunt for the missing paper.

There yet remained Süssmayer's declaration to be got over, and also some evidence corroborative of it, from the widow and others, which had turned up during the Weber controversy. Süssmayer's claims were simply set down as presumptuous and incredible; his capability of writing the music was denied, and as one or two erroneous statements had been detected in his letter, the truth of the whole was impugned. As to the corroborative evidence, it was attempted to explain this away by observing that the widow herself had given contradictory accounts at different times, and that the other witnesses had but incomplete personal knowledge of the facts they deposed to.

These answers were considered so conclusive that little or no doubt remained as to the genuineness of the newly found score, when an accident re-opened the inquiry. The comparison of Süssmayer's writing had been made with two hastily written specimens, which, after much seeking, were all that could be procured; but it happened that after the end of the before-mentioned investigation a certain Baron von Lannoy offered, for inspection, two autographs of pieces from an opera written by Süssmayer in 1793, two years after Mozart's death.

When these manuscripts were produced, the first glimpse of them excited the greatest amazement. The specimens of Süssmayer's music previously inspected had presented a very marked difference from Mozart's handwriting; but these, to everybody's astonishment, resembled it so closely, that only the positive evidence as to their history could convince the examiners that they were not in Mozart's hand. On a closer examination, the similarity of the writing to Mozart's was found almost incredible; and what was more to the purpose, when the Wallsegg score was compared with them, the resemblance of the second and following numbers to the new Süssmayer autographs was more absolute still, inasmuch as the latter contained all the peculiarities which had attracted attention in the former. The shapes of the letters P, Q, and T, for example, which could nowhere be found in Mozart's writing, prevailed exclusively in the later Süssmayer examples. The other objections urged by the minority now acquired greater weight, and the longer and

the more carefully the comparison was made, the more confusing it became, particularly as in the Requiem score some signs were still found which corresponded better with Mozart's autograph than with any of Süssmayer's.

In this state of things only one means remained of arriving at the truth, namely to apply to the yet living widow of the great master, and to ask her whether, as far as she knew, Mozart had finished, or had left unfinished, his last composition. It was true that she had already, on several occasions, stated that the latter was the case, but at former periods she had also asserted the contrary; and in the difficulty raised by the recent discoveries it was felt that a positive decision, from the best possible source, was highly to be desired.

The widow answered promptly; she said—

"If the score is complete, it is not by Mozart, for he did not finish it. It is then desirable to look at what Süssmayer has written, for in my judgment no man is able to imitate another person's writing so exactly that it cannot be discovered. Thus much upon this; and now I declare that no other than Süssmayer finished the Requiem, which was not so difficult, since, as is known, the chief parts were all laid out, and Süssmayer could not err."

This answer was decisive. Guided by the new light thrown on the question, a further examination of the score showed the differences between the writing of the first movement, which was really Mozart's, and of the subsequent portions, in the now identified hand of Süssmayer. Some members of the committee were still inclined fondly to cling to the idea that the whole was genuine; but this view could not long be persevered in, in the face of the strong evidence to the contrary, and the forgery became fully established, as the only reasonable conclusion that could be drawn from the facts of the case.

It is difficult to divine what motive Süssmayer could have had for continuing to feign Mozart's writing for some years after his death;—it may have been for mere bravado, in the exultation of his first success, or he may have had the intention of passing off some of his writings as Mozart's;—but it is highly probable that, had these later imitations not been found, the truth as to the authorship of the Requiem would not have been discovered.

In considering this remarkable history, although, of course, Süssmayer's conduct is indefensible in a moral point of view, we cannot but admire the skill shown by him in the transaction, as regards both the imitation of the handwriting and the musical composition.

The caligraphy of the notes and signs used in music is as peculiar to the individual as ordinary current hand, and persons accustomed to see the manuscript of a composer can identify his writing easily. The imitation of a musical manuscript is as difficult as that of a text autograph. Some rare cases have been known. Joachim, for example, the eminent violinist, amused himself, when a boy, by copying with singular

dexterity the notation of Mendelssohn, whom he held in great veneration; and one of the Bach family had a wife who wrote her husband's compositions in a hand mistaken for his own. Süssmayer's must have been a remarkably accurate imitation to stand such severe comparisons by such acute judges; and yet it must have been quickly done, and without any previous practice; for the fabricated score must have been produced in a very short time, to satisfy the demand of the Count, who, when he heard of Mozart's death, must have naturally called for the immediate delivery of the work he had ordered and partly paid for.

The musical skill shown by Süssmayer in the large share he contributed to the composition is still more extraordinary and admirable. It is not our business here to go into musical details; but we may state generally what his work consisted of. It has been already mentioned that only one movement—the first—had been *finished* by Mozart. In several of the following he had written the vocal parts, and had here and there given indications as to the nature of the instrumental accompaniments. These Süssmayer had to complete, and the insertion of the wanting parts, in a style to harmonize with that of such a master, required no mean attainments.

In one movement, the *Lacrymosa*, Mozart had only sketched out the first few bars, and Süssmayer had to carry on the idea, which he did in so masterly a manner that its very possibility has been denied. An eminent English critic says,—

> It seems to me utterly impossible that any man can have entered into another's incomplete thought, and carried it on in unbroken unity of phrasing and feeling, as Süssmayer pretends to have done in this instance. As well might it be assumed that any stanza of poetry had been finished by another imagination than his who conceived the first line,—that any sentence of an argument could be completed by another's power of thought.

Whether the writer of this passage had in his mind the well-known

SIC VOS NON VOBIS!

anecdote, we do not know; but assuredly the thing which he pronounces impossible was done. The work of Mozart and the work of Sussmayer lie side by side in the Library at Vienna, and tell their own story.

But Süssmayer's share in the Requiem went much farther than the mere filling in of instrumental parts, or the completion of passages already begun. Several movements towards the end Mozart had not written a note of; Süssmayer claimed them in his letter as entirely his own composition, and there is not a scrap of evidence to disprove his assertion, except the internal character of the music, which, as in the case above cited, the most eminent critics deny that it was in the power of any one to compose except the great master himself. Even Gottfried Weber, who impugned the authenticity of the work generally, admitted that "there were flowers in these parts which never grew in Süssmayer's garden." And Marx, another great German writer, said, after quoting passages from the Agnus Dei, "Well, if these are not by

Mozart, then he is a Mozart who wrote them." And yet, if there is any truth in evidence, it is incontestable that Mozart did *not* write these passages, and that Süssmayer *did* write them. The only way out of the difficulty lies in the possibility that Süssmayer, having been much with Mozart during his last illness, may either have obtained sketches for the later portions of the work, or may have heard them played by Mozart, and so may have remembered them sufficiently to write them down. But in any case the musical ability shown in his part throughout the work is of the highest order; and makes us regret that we do not know more of him.

We have been the more desirous to lay this extraordinary history before the public, because in this country, where the facts are not generally known, the belief is still held, even in high musical quarters, that the Requiem is entirely Mozart's composition. A preface to one of the popular editions of the work declares this positively, and whenever it is performed by the Sacred Harmonic Society, the notice given in the Book of Words repeats the assertion. This opinion, however, is clearly at variance with the truth, and it is a pity it should be still persevered in. We must be content to accept the conclusion that, although much of the music is essentially Mozart's, yet the completion of the work, and the composition of several important portions, are due to another hand.

King Laurin's Rose-Garden.

Pass out of the busy arcaded streets of Botzen—that bustling border-town, where the trellised vine still recalls Italy, though the crook-backed, bare-kneed figures which stride springily along in their short jackets, scarlet vests, and feather-bedecked hats, are unmistakably Tyrolese; and where German and Italian, with all the various dialects of Romance or Teutonic stock which still linger in the neighbouring valleys, mingle in the fruit-market to form one discordant and unintelligible Babel—pass into the quiet open space before the church, whose Lombard griffins beneath a high-pitched roof of many-coloured tiles are no less significant of a meeting point of races: thence, if you look eastward, where the green rounded hills of the foreground recede for a space, you will see a serried array of pale spires fringing the distant horizon. If, as is probable, you have approached Botzen by the great highway of the Brenner, their forms will be quite new to you. Something they may remind you of the aiguilles of Chamouni; but those are a few grand forms of simple majesty: here the whole mountain ridge is splintered into a clustering wilderness of rocky shafts, endless in their fantastic variety of outline, and some of them comparable for their slender delicacy only to the spears and mimic aiguilles which the sun fashions in the ice-fall of the glacier. Their colour is as unique as their form. The setting sun will light them up with a warm and ruddy glow, but when this has faded away they stand out like a rank of ghostly sentinels against the evening sky, glimmering with pale and greenish hues. These mountains are the peaks of the Rosengarten.

Whence comes their romantic name? This is likely to be one of the traveller's first questions. Can it have been suggested by the colour of their rocks? To those who have only seen them from a distance nothing would seem more improbable. Yet if you penetrate into their recesses you will find the pale monotony of their walls brighten into unexpected contrasts of colour, where soft grey is relieved by patches of delicate rosy pink. Or does the name, as some have fancied, come from the beds of rhododendron which blossom at their feet? Both these hypotheses are, however, rather unsatisfactory and far-fetched, and the real explanation of the name is probably to be found in legend.

Mediæval literature has much to say about rose-gardens. In its widest sense the word signified any open and pleasant space, such as might be found before the walls of many a German town, where kings might meet their nobles in assembled council, or where fair dames might distribute garlands to contending knights or minstrels. Such a place is

doubtless meant when an old chronicle tells us how Eric, the Danish King, "*in campo spacioso et plano, hortus Rosarum dicto, prope Rostock maximam et multum solemnem curiam tenuit;*" and it was in this sense that Mainz, Mannheim, Gernsheim, and Strassburg all boasted of their rose-gardens. In a more special and restricted signification the name was applied to a fenced and jealously-guarded pleasure-ground, reserved for the exclusive enjoyment of the owner and his most privileged friends, so that they might take their pleasure within its bounds secure and unmolested, free from every prying eye and intruding footfall. It may easily be conceived that a trespass on such a garden was considered by its owner the deadliest and most inexpiable of insults. It was, perhaps, within such a garden as this that the twelve old poets were depicted as walking, in the picture which used to be exhibited at the annual singers' festival at Nuremberg.

But of all these gardens, by far the most renowned in legend was Krimhild's Rose-garden at Worms. The poem in which it is celebrated is later than the *Nibelungen Lied*, the author of which knows nothing of the famous garden, but of all the poems which belong to the Nibelungen cycle it most nearly resembles the German national epic in subject as well as in spirit. It probably derives its origin from the natural desire to bring into direct conflict the two great national heroes of German legend—Siegfried of the Netherlands and Dietrich of Bern (Theodoric of Verona). At Worms upon the Rhine, Krimhild, the daughter of Gibich the Burgundian King, is mistress of a rose-garden, glorious and wide, fenced round only by a silken thread, but guarded by twelve mighty champions, who keep it against all comers. Among these champions are Gibich himself, his two sons, and, greatest of all, Siegfried, Krimhild's suitor—"Horn Siegfried," the invulnerable Volsung hero. In the confidence of his heart Gibich offers to pay suit and service to whosoever, with a band of equal numbers, shall vanquish the Burgundian twelve, and force his way into the garden. Krimhild offers to each of the conquerors the additional reward of a garland of roses and a kiss from her own lips. Far away in Lombardy Dietrich hears of the presumptuous challenge, and, encouraged by old Hildebrand, his sage and faithful mentor, determines to take it up. Ten champions are speedily found to accompany their lord on his perilous undertaking. But for a long while a twelfth is not forthcoming. At last Hildebrand suggests his brother Ilsan. For many years Ilsan, once a mighty warrior, has not been seen in court or camp, and, in the seclusion of a monastery, is passing in tranquil piety the remainder of his days. But the battle-fire is not yet wholly quenched in the old monk's breast. When his brother's message comes he extorts leave of absence from his prior, once more buckles on his harness, and goes to join the eleven. The sequel of the story, which affords a congenial theme and copious material for the poet's war-loving muse, we need not follow in detail. Suffice it to say that after a series of desperate single combats, victory declares itself for the Lombard band.

The pride of the Burgundian King is humbled, the spirit of his haughty daughter tamed, the jealously-guarded bounds are crossed, and each of the victors receives his well-earned guerdon of a garland and a kiss.

This is the legend of the Rose-garden at Worms, in the German legendary cycle usually called, by way of distinction, the Greater Rose-garden. The story with which we are immediately concerned, and which is also to be found in the *Heldenbuch*, is there called the Lesser, or King Laurin's Rose-garden. It owes its origin to a different group of conceptions, and is associated with a different locality.

It was a pretty fancy, long and deeply rooted in the mind of country folk, which lent charms drawn from the invisible world to places which nature had left desolate or forbidding. Something of the divinity which our heathen forefathers attached to the solitude of their primæval forests still clung about the sacred spots, but in a more graceful and less sombre form. Under the names of elves and fairies, dwarfs and brownies, many a being of the pre-Christian mythology retained fast hold on the popular belief. By indications full of significance to the initiated in fairy lore, they betrayed their presence in their favourite haunts. An elfin bolt, an elf-knot in a tree, a fairy ring, a flying echo, or a dancing light, these and many another sign in wood and field were tokens from the unseen world. Sometimes a belated peasant, stumbling unawares on hallowed ground, had heard the patter of fairy footsteps, or caught the dying echoes of a tiny horn. Others, more favoured, had been admitted to the elfin realm and seen its glories; and after long years, which passed as a single day, had returned to earth to find their compeers dead and gone, their children old men, and themselves forgotten. Could you but learn the secret, it was said, of this hollow tree, or of that gray stone, it would prove the portal to a subterranean palace of such magnificence, that all the treasures of this upper world would pale before it. Nay, it might well be that this barren heath, those frowning cliffs, were, after all, mere seeming; and if the scales which dim our mortal vision could but drop from our eyes, we should find ourselves in a glorious and lovely garden, watered by rippling brooks and rich with flower and fruit. The Blumlis Alp, and many a similar name, bear witness to these beliefs; and it is often only by them that we can explain the application to spots among the hills or on the moors of names which appear singularly inappropriate.

One of these innumerable legends had attached itself to the mountains of Tyrol. Somewhere among them was situate the realm of the dwarf-king Laurin, a mighty potentate in the elfin world. The mountaineers were never tired of repeating stories which illustrated his wealth and his power, his malice and his strength. One had been led astray by the echoings of his horn among the rocky fastnesses of the hills, and had but stayed his steps when already on the precipice's brink. Another had heard the hammer-clink which marked the spot where, deep within the bowels of the mountain, his subjects were seeking for and working the golden ore. But most of all their fancy was fond of dwelling on his magic

Rose-garden, which lay concealed somewhere in the wildest and most inaccessible part of the mountains. This was his one possession above the ground, and woe to the luckless wight who unwittingly overstepped its bounds. The mangled corpse of many a hunter found lying at the foot of a savage cliff bore witness to the jealousy with which the elfin-king watched his garden, and the inexorable severity with which he punished any infringement on his property rights. Nor is he always content with acting on the defensive; too frequently he becomes the aggressor, and by repeated acts of tyranny and wanton oppression, asserts his suzerainty over the trembling inhabitants of the Alpine valleys.

It is on one of these acts, the abduction of a mortal maiden, and on her subsequent release, that is founded the legend which has perpetuated his name. The various written versions of the story which have survived to our time are all of them comparatively late, and each bears evident traces of being the recasting of an earlier original. Indeed, their authors appeal for confirmation of their story to the written sources from which they have borrowed. But these later versions, though agreeing in the main incidents, differ so much from each other, not merely in language, but in the names and numbers of the characters, and in the circumstances by which the story is introduced and embellished, that they cannot possibly have followed one and the same original.

Let us take, as probably the earliest, that which is to be found in one of the several editions of the German *Heldenbuch*. Simild, the fair daughter of Dieterolf of Styria, has gone out, accompanied by her maidens and by a joyous band of knights, to take her pastime "under the lindens green." Laurin is lurking in the wood, and his lawless fancy is smitten by the maiden's charms. Attired in his cap of darkness, he watches for a moment when she has strayed apart from her companions into the woods, and carries her off to his subterranean home. The loss is soon discovered. The attendants wring their hands, the knights are furious but equally helpless; and Dietlieb, her brother, rides off to seek counsel from Hildebrand. Dietrich's sage old counsellor is now living at Gardenna, his castle on the Garda lake. He receives his guest with hospitality, hears his story, and next morning the two heroes, followed by a gallant company, ride off together to Bern (Verona) to obtain assistance at the court of Dietrich, the "Amelung's trost," the redresser of all wrongs. On their way an unhappy woodman begs their help, and describes in piteous terms the tyranny and oppression which Laurin exercises over the country-folk far and wide, and the savage vengeance which he exacts for trespasses, real or supposed, on the precincts of his magic garden. On their arrival at Bern, with an inconsequence not unusual in these rudely constructed stories, the original purpose of Dietlieb's expedition seems to be forgotten, and the interest is concentrated on the woodman's more recent tale of wrongs. The impetuous Witich, one of Dietrich's champions, persuades his master to accompany him to the scene of Laurin's cruelties, to board the little tyrant in person, and to punish him for his

presumptuous acts against Dietrich's faithful subjects. The two set off together; and, after riding far, at last, in the midst of the savage wilderness of Tyrol, the wondrous garden suddenly bursts upon their sight. It is rich with flower and fruit, the air is sweet with the breath of roses, and rings with the song of birds. Dietrich fancies himself in Paradise, and cannot find it in his heart to harm such loveliness. But his companion overcomes his scruples by reminding him of Laurin's cruelty and haughtiness, and so they pass the magic bounds and enter the garden. Then comes the "looting." They slash and hack right and left with their swords, turn their horses loose to trample down and browse upon the roses, and soon reduce the object of the elfin-king's pride and tender care to a scene of ruin and desolation. Wearied with their exertions, the knights throw themselves on the grass to rest. But they are not left long in peace. Soon a figure is seen riding towards them, so glorious in its splendour, that Witich thinks it must be St. Michael. Still they deem it prudent to buckle on their armour. It turns out to be, in fact, the elfin-king himself. He is but three spans high, and he rides a steed no bigger than a goat, but his coat of mail and his trappings glitter like the sun with gold and precious stones. Full of wrath at the outrage which has been offered him, and the ruin which has been wrought, he assails the knights with bitter reproaches, and demands the instant payment of the penalty exacted by him from all trespassers —namely, the right hand and the left foot. Witich retorts with contemptuous taunts at the size of the tiny hero, and can scarcely be persuaded to mount his horse and meet him on equal terms. The combat does not last long. At the first assault Witich finds himself disarmed by the resistless lance of his adversary, who is proceeding to amputate the required hand and foot. Dietrich comes to his friend's help; but, in spite of his strength, valour, and renown, would speedily have met with the same fate, had it not been for the timely arrival of Hildebrand and Dietlieb. The elfin-king possesses three things of magic power, a ring and a girdle, each of which gives him the strength of twelve men, and a cap of darkness which makes him invisible. All day long the battle rages between the two heroes, and terrible are the blows dealt on either side, but Dietrich, aided by Hildebrand's sage counsel, strips his foe successively of the ring, the girdle, and the cap. Finding himself at his adversary's mercy, Laurin appeals in despair to Dietlieb, confesses that it is he who has carried off Simild; but says that he intends to make her his queen, and implores a brother-in-law's aid in the hour of need. The sudden appeal is not without effect. Dietlieb forgets the slightly irregular way in which the relationship had been formed, and rushes to Laurin's assistance. An unnatural combat would have ensued between Dietlieb and Dietrich, had not Hildebrand's prudent counsels prevented it and reconciled the contending parties. Laurin acknowledges Dietrich's superior might, professes to forgive the injury done to his garden, and invites the whole band to a royal banquet

at his palace within the hill. The invitation is accepted, in spite of Hildebrand's prudent remonstrances, and they all ride off together in the moonlight till they reach the green meadows beneath the cliff, where lies the entrance to Laurin's subterranean realm. The hollow mountain re-echoes with the song and dance of elves, and when the golden horn is sounded, the door in the cliff-side flies open, and from within a glory of precious stones flashes out far into the night. High festival is held in the royal palace, and the fair Simild appears to greet her brother, and to preside at the banquet. But the treacherous dwarf has drugged the cups; and, after the feast, the heroes find themselves bound hand and foot, and thrown into a vault deep in the bowels of the mountain. Laurin determines to hang all except Dietlieb, whom he spares for his sister's sake. But in the night Simild frees her brother, and gives the other heroes rings, which deliver them from their magic fetters. And now follows a terrible fight within the hill. The corpses of dwarfs soon lie piled in heaps round Dietrich and his men; five mighty giants, summoned by Laurin to his aid, fall beneath the heroes' swords, and, at last all their foes are slain, Simild is freed, and Laurin is carried off to be a jester (*gaukler*) at the court of Bern.

Such is the story. There is a shorter and obviously later version in the *Heldenbuch* which bears the name of Caspar von der Roen, a compilation which appears to date from the latter half of the fifteenth century. As compared with the story which we have followed, this version is remarkable for the increasing rudeness of the language and conceptions, and for having departed still further from what was probably the original groundwork of the legend. The opening scene is not laid in Styria, but outside the walls of Bern (Verona), where we are introduced to Dietrich and his heroes taking their pleasure and carelessly plucking roses as they stroll up and down. Old Hildebrand remarks that he knows a garden where if they did what they were doing there, they would soon find themselves in evil plight. He then proceeds to describe the wonders of Laurin's garden, the wealth and power of its owner, and the penalties which he enforces on trespassers. The heroes' curiosity is excited, they have never heard that such marvels existed in their neighbourhood, and they resolve to go off and explore them. Having ridden off into the mountains, and at last hit upon the garden, they find their entrance barred by a golden gate. They try to kick it down, but the door resists the kicks of single heroes, and so they resolve to take a run at it together—"*wir wollen es aufstossen mit eynem grosen zulauf.*" The door gives way beneath their united efforts, and they rush in and make havoc of the flowers and fruit-trees with their horses and swords. Henceforward the story is much the same as in the other version. It is to be noticed that the episodes of Simild's abduction, and of the woodman, are here quite omitted, and hence the destruction of Laurin's garden loses the justification in any previous outrage, and becomes a mere act of rude wantonness. Indeed, it must be confessed that in Caspar von

der Roen's version, Dietrich and his gallant companions talk and act very much like vulgar boors. When Laurin complains of the ruin of his garden, Dietrich begins to make a clumsy apology, to the effect that the roses would all come up again next year; but is cut short by Witich, who is indignant that even the semblance of an apology should be made to an adversary that rides a steed no bigger than a goat, and who threatens to take the little monster by the legs and throw him over his own wall.

However, none of the several versions in which the legend appears can lay claim to any artistic beauties of form. They are written in the rudest doggerel, the descriptions are tedious, and the episodes are awkwardly fitted together. Judged simply by the rules of form, the poem of the *Lesser Rose-garden* must be placed in the lowest class of literature. Its real interest consists in the questions which are suggested by the legend with which it deals. What are the sources out of which it grew up? what the influences by which it has been modified? what relation does it bear to popular fancy, to the epic cycle into which it has found its way, and to historical fact?

Who was the author of the poem in its present form, and what is its date? These are naturally the first questions which we should attempt to answer. Could we but believe the poem itself, there would be little difficulty about the former point, for it ends thus:—

> Heinrich von Osterdingen
> dise abentür gesungen hat,
> das sie so meisterlichen stat:
> des waren jm die fürsten hold,
> sie gaben jm silber und gold
> pfennig und reiche wat.
> hirmit dis buch ein ende hat
> von den ausserwelten tegen:
> Got geb uns allen seinen segen.

This assertion of authorship is plain enough: unfortunately, it is impossible to believe it, for what little we know of the alleged author throws him back to a time very far removed from that which the internal evidence of language and style shows to have been the date of our poem.

Heinrich von Osterdingen, or Ofterdingen, is a very shadowy personage. Where and when he lived, whence he got his name, whether from Oftertingen in Swabia, or Everdingen in Austria, indeed, whether he is a historical character at all, are almost equally matters of doubt. All, or almost all, we know of him is that he plays a prominent part in the *Wartburger Krieg* or *Wartburg War*. This is a poem which probably dates from the early part of the fourteenth century. It is a kind of "Sänger-Sage," or Minstrel Legend, and has for its subject a lyric tournament held, after the manner with which we have been made familiar by Tannhäuser, in the castle of Wartburg, the same of which, long afterwards, Luther was the illustrious tenant. In this poem Heinrich von Ofterdingen appears as the poetical champion or representative of Leopold of Austria against

the rival claims of Hermann of Thuringia and King Philip Augustus of France. Accordingly, it appears that Ofterdingen belonged, or was believed to belong, to the twelfth century, the so-called "Swabian era" of early German literature. Far different was the age to which our poem belongs. A glance at the revolutions through which German poetry had in the meantime passed will show the width of the gulf which separates the two eras.

The glories of the Swabian era, that bright spring-time of German literature, in which it seemed for a while that every class and every occupation burst into joyous, spontaneous, unpremeditated song, were of short duration. The so-called age of chivalry, of which the knightly epos or ballad was the reflex or idealization, passed away from Germany earlier than from any other European state. It may be said to have ended with the fall of the House of Hohenstauffen, and with it passed away something of tenderness and delicacy from the German music. The gay and careless life which the "minnesingers" reflected in their lays was succeeded by an age more troubled, more serious, and more prosaic. The change was to be regretted, though it in some respects marked an advance, but it was inevitable. It was in vain that the poets of the next generation strove to recall the charm which had fled. Instead of praising fair dames, and singing the pleasures of love, of the festival, and of war, they began to idealize the knightly life, and to make the knight the model of all the Christian virtues. Their ideal poet is as unreal as their ideal knight. The contending bards in the *Wartburg War* are represented as busying themselves with abstract questions and sophistical puzzles, fitter for a university than for a pleasure-loving court. The first result of this tendency was a hopeless divorce between poetry and real life, in consequence of which the former soon evaporated into vague sentimentalities and vapid conceits. But it had another result still less looked for by the poets themselves. The princes and nobles had left off composing poetry and encouraging literature. They had much more serious business to attend to—fighting and plundering. But the burghers, who meanwhile had become wealthy and important, liked hearing about courts and knightly heroes, especially when the latter were made the patterns of piety. They did not perceive the artificiality of the strains, and they were pleased with their moral tone. They constituted themselves liberal patrons of the neglected poet-craft, and under their auspices poetry became a lucrative profession. Thus arose the guilds of "meister-singers," who, for a long generation, delighted or wearied Germany with their dull moralities. Meanwhile, genuine poetry, which had been banished from the palace, and was stifled in the burgher's hall, fled away to the cottage. Everywhere in the country, especially in such parts as the highlands of Bavaria or the mountains of Tyrol, still lived the quaint fancies of the local mythology, tales of dwarf and nixen and mountain-sprite, and these were taken up by the itinerant singers who wandered from house to house, and interwoven strangely with fragments of the knightly epos.

Then followed an age which in some respects resembled the Alexandrian age in Greek literature. In the fifteenth century the invention of printing suggested the attempt to collect the scattered heritage of national poetry, and to fix it in a more permanent and definite form. The waifs and strays of legend and ballad, which were floating about the country in an oral form, were sought out, written down, and strung together in a rude order so as to form a kind of epic cycle. Just as in England, about the same time, Sir Thomas Malory compiled and printed his *Romance of Arthur*, so in Germany, throughout the fifteenth century, appeared various editions of the *Heldenbuch, or Book of Heroes*, a collection of the legends relating to the heroes of the incomplete German epic—Siegfried, Etzel, Dietrich, Hildebrand, and their like. It is needless to say that in such a collection would appear poems of widely different merit, and belonging to widely different ages, from the *Nibelungen Lied* with its rude heroic fire to the commonest ballad on a chapman's list. Yet even of these latter there are none which can be lightly passed by without examination. Imbedded in many of them may be found world-old beliefs and traditions, and traces of genuine poetic fancy, obscured though they be by frequent recastings, and defaced by illiterate handling. Of hardly any are the authors known, if, indeed, the term authorship can be applied to the process of formation which a popular legend undergoes beneath successive hands. But popular criticism is as little content to leave in obscurity the origin of poems as of institutions; and if it cannot find a Homer or Lycurgus ready to hand, will soon fashion them. Accordingly, the collectors of these poems, or more probably the "rhapsodes" who had recited them, did not scruple to father their rude lays on famous poets of the past. For this purpose they usually selected names belonging to the glorious "Swabian era" of the twelfth century, names which, as may be seen in the *Wartburg War*, had already become half-mythical in the next generation, and which were now appropriated and applied with as little scruple as the Greeks had shown in their treatment of the names of Homer, Linus, Orpheus, and Musæus. And thus it comes to pass that we find the knightly names of Oswald von Wölkenstein, of Heinrich von Ofterdingen, and of other noble "minnesingers," attached to rude productions which, by their uncouth garb and homely rustic sentiments, belie their putative origin at every point.

We cannot, then, ascribe to the poem of the *Lesser Rose-garden*, in the dress in which we are acquainted with it, an earlier date than the fifteenth century. The materials of which it is composed are, of course, far earlier. Perhaps the earliest *written* mention of King Laurin is in that same poem of the *Wartburg War* which has already been referred to once or twice. It tells a strange story about a dwarf king, Simels, who owns a land called "Palackers," which has the misfortune of being infested by monstrous worms, "crocodiles, they are called by the people of the land." He sends to his brother Laurin, who is lord of mountains "in Dutch land and in Welsh land," and who supplies him with two

griffin eggs, to be hatched by an ostrich, the produce of which apparently serves the purpose of extirpating the "worms." Before long, however, we find that Laurin has passed out of this region of grotesque fancy to take his place among historical characters. A Bavarian chronicler of the fifteenth century tells us how, "after King Adelgar, was ruler his son, King Lareyn, who was in honour and might one and fifty years, and of whom we still sing songs and tell stories." "There is still existing a whole book-full of rhymes about him, but they are fashioned in poetical wise," says this grave writer of history, who also informs us that "those of Tyrol and Eschland still show King Laurin's harness." The rationalistic method of interpreting legend reaches a still further stage in another writer of the same date, who speaks of "Count Laurenz of Tyrol," who is called Laurenz the strong, because of his great power and wealth, which his people dig for him out of the mountains, whence they are called "earth-mannikins" (erdmännlein). Two more notices shall be added to show how widely popular the legend had become, and what strange purposes it was made to serve. In a mystery play of the end of the fifteenth century we find among the soldiers of Herod the names of Dietrich, *Laurein*, and Hillebrant; whilst Martin Luther illustrates the allegorical method of interpretation by saying "as though I were to make of Dietrich of Bern, Christ; of the giant with whom he strove, the Devil; of the dwarf, Humility; and of his imprisonment, the death of Christ."

If we examine the poem in its present form, it is not difficult to detect in it the presence of two elements, originally independent of each other, and, even in the most perfect form of the legend, never thoroughly combined. It is evidently a dwarf story grafted on to the stock of Dietrich legends. The abduction of mortal maidens is an incident common in all dwarf legends, and it is only an afterthought which makes Laurin's victim the sister of the Styrian hero, Dietlieb, and which brings Dietrich to her rescue. The juncture of the two stories, one of which is concerned with the riches, power and capricious tyranny of the tiny monarch, the other with the exploits of the national hero, is but imperfectly accomplished, and the suture is still visible. At the date of the *Heldenbuch*, however, this ingrafting of the popular mythology on the heroic legend had struck deep root, and giants and dwarfs had become a recognized part of the epic poet's stock in trade. As to the part which dwarfs were supposed to play in the economy of the legendary world, let us hear what the fifteenth century editor of the *Heldenbuch* has to say:—

"You are also to know why God made the little dwarfs and the great giants, and thereafter the heroes. In the first place he made the dwarfs for this cause, that the land and the mountains were waste and untilled, and there was much store of silver and gold, precious stones, and pearls, in the mountains. Therefore God made the dwarfs exceeding cunning and wise, that they knew evil and good right well, and whereunto all things were good. They knew also whereunto the stones were good. Some stones give great strength. Some make them invisible that wear

them. That is called a 'nebel kap' (cap of darkness). And therefore God gave the dwarf craft and wisdom, that they built them fair hollow mountains, and he gave them honour, so that they were kings and lords as well as the heroes, and he gave them therewithal great riches. . . . . There were also many kings among the dwarfs, who had giants to serve them. . . . ."

Then he goes on to tell how the giants were created to slay the evil monsters which wasted the earth, and how after them came the heroes whose mission was to make war upon the paynim giants and dwarfs.

It is not our purpose to enter here into any speculations as to the origin of the belief in dwarfs, and the psychological tendencies out of which it grew. Only two points with reference to it shall here be mentioned, both of which are naturally suggested by the Laurin legend.

The first consideration is of wider application than to dwarf legends, and extends to all similar mythological beliefs. We are accustomed to speak of the "insensibility of the ancients to natural scenery." This phrase, when analyzed, may be found to mean one of two things—either that the mind of the "ancients" was so constituted as to be actually insensible to the beauty or grandeur of inanimate nature, or that this sensibility took a different form from what it does with us. The first of these assertions we should deny, the second we should attempt to explain. The position of mind involved in the æsthetic appreciation of an object implies something of a conscious superiority to the object appreciated, in so far, at least, as the critic feels that he has to some extent *mastered* it, and attained to an apprehension of its true nature and import, and of the laws by which it is determined. In order to arrive at this state the mind must have consciously detached itself from and externalized the objects surveyed, to which it then lends charms drawn from its own feelings or imagination. But this artificial relation to nature is utterly different to that in which the Greek found himself. Mr. Ruskin's delight in scenery is as widely diverse from that of Homer as the reflective pantheism of Wordsworth from the simple nature worship of primitive religions. Even the cultivated Greek of a later day was not wholly free from the primitive feeling of vague terror or reverential awe excited by natural phenomena, a sentiment which lurks behind the Epicurean's strained professions of indifference, and which the Greek's ignorance and neglect of physical science tended to perpetuate. Thus in him the polytheistic view lingered on in spite of his philosophy. "No one praises the gods," says Aristotle; and, in like manner, we may say that whilst nature remained mysterious and unknown it could not be made the subject of descriptions or æsthetic criticism. But we must not therefore conclude that its different aspects exercised no influence upon the mind. It influenced, but influenced in a different way. Where the cultivated man reflects, the child or the uncultivated man receives impressions. The emotions excited in him by beauty or grandeur assume an objective form, and body themselves forth as mythological entities. Graceful

dryads and blithe fairies dance over his forest lawns, mysterious beings haunt his mountains. According as delight in the charms of nature or terror of its unknown powers preponderate, the fancy assumes a brighter or a more sombre hue, and the entities which it creates appear as friends of the human race or as their foes. Hence we need not wonder that it is precisely round the most romantic spots—those on which tourists now-a-days lavish expressions of wonder and admiration—that legendary and mythological fancies most thickly clustered. This same region of Tyrol, where Laurin ruled, gave birth to a whole world of marvels and adventures, all coloured by the scenery amongst which they grew up; and, like it, sometimes delicate and lovely, sometimes monstrous or grotesque. Here is one, instinct with the very spirit of the Adige valley, its alternating sternness and grace. Alone, beneath the solemn walls of rock which close in the Adige on either side, rides the young Otnit, to find that of which he has dreamed. The sun is shining over the mountains and piercing the clouds, when he comes to a meadow by the Garda Lake, where bright flowers and tender grass shoot forth on every side, and the air is ringing with the song of birds. A path, marked by the track of tiny feet, leads him to the fountain, and to the linden-tree which might give shade to five hundred knights. Under it he finds his father, King Elberich, comeliest of the elfin race, and lord of many a mountain and valley. Elberich brings forth, out of a hollow in the cliff, flashing armour, in which the young knight arrays himself, and rides off joyfully through the greenwood. In the savage mountains above Trent lurk the dragons which waste the land as far as the bower at Garda. With horn and hound Otnit rides into the wilderness to slay the monsters. A fairy throws him into a magic slumber, and long keeps him prisoner within a hollow rock, but he escapes, fights with and slays the dragons, but at last himself falls a victim to treacherous arts. His horse and hound find their way back to Garda, and thereby the empress, who sits waiting for him before the gate, first learns of his death.

One other point may be mentioned about dwarf legends—a peculiarity which derives its origin from the sudden shock given to German mythology by the introduction of Christianity. The dwarfs are always heathens; Laurin is expressly called a pagan: indeed, as representatives of a pre-Christian mythology, the dwarfs could hardly be otherwise. But it is interesting to note the modifications which this difference of creed introduces into their relation to men. This relation is rarely that of direct and uncompromising hostility. Much more often it takes the form of a kind of indefinite estrangement, not unaccompanied by kindly acts and feelings on either side, but constantly in danger of being converted into direct enmity by disrespectful treatment on the one side or malicious tricks on the other. The dwarfs and elves give one the impression of a shy and shrinking, and, on the whole, hardly-treated race, retiring before new and powerful comers, and driven by the ruthless advance of civilization from the woods and mountains which were once their own. They belong to an old, old

world—to a state of things which is passing away. They charge mortals with faithlessness, that is to say, desertion of the old creed. They dislike church building and the sound of church bells. Indeed, all innovations are distasteful to them—the ploughing-up of forests or moors, the working of new mines in the hills. It would seem as if the peasant had thrown into this creation of his fancy all his conservative instincts, all his lingering fond regrets for the old beliefs and the old ways which he was reluctantly compelled to abandon.

So much for one half of our story. On the other half we will not dwell long. The Dietrich legend evidently belongs to the cycle of Ostrogothic legends which glorify the exploits of the Amelung race—of Ermenrich, of Dietrich, and of Hildebrand. The local names round which they circle are Raben, Bern, and Garden (Ravenna, Verona, and the fortress near the Garda Lake); it is especially the two latter, and the Adige valley generally, which seems to have been their peculiar home, where they struck deepest root and lingered longest. The castle of old Hildebrand was long shown on the Brenner Pass, above the "Berner Klause;" the country-folk may possibly know of it to this day. This cycle of legends, however, soon travelled beyond its own home, and received additions and modifications from other sources. As a nation advances to unity, its local and tribal cults, beliefs, traditions, necessarily and naturally pass through successive stages of connection, of assimilation, and of fusion. Thus we have seen how, in the *Greater Rose-garden*, the Dietrich legend was brought into connection with those which relate to the Netherland hero and to the Burgundian house; and how, in the *Lesser Rose-garden*, it gathered into itself a popular mythological belief.

More difficult to determine than the relations of legends to each other is the relation of legend or myth to history. In the case of the German epic cycle we have what the historians of early Greece have not, a historical narration marching alongside of poetry and romance, and professing to deal with the same persons and events, so that we are enabled to compare and contrast the two. It must be confessed that the result of the comparison is not such as to encourage those who labour to unravel a thread of positive history from the tangled web of tradition and legend. It seems to come to little more than this, that history may be, and constantly is, the *occasion* of legend. Striking events and striking characters—we may add, striking natural objects—are gathered into and become part of the mythological system which forms the mental atmosphere of the prehistoric or unhistoric man. But what shape they will there assume it is impossible to predict. Often the copy resembles the original no more than the precipice over which we fall in a nightmare resembles the crease in our sheet which has caused a momentary irritation, and given a direction to our disturbed fancies. What is there in common between Dietrich, the knight errant, Ermenrich's nephew, the homeless fugitive at Etzel's court, and the great and prosperous Theodoric, who lived one hundred years after Hermanaric, and was born two years after Attila's death? Mythology

knows nothing of the laws of time or space. It presents a confused phantasmagoria, in which persons and events the most incongruous are mingled together like "the jumbled rubbish of a dream." Possibly, in the fight among the mountains and the destruction of Laurin's garden, we may catch faint echoes of a time when fierce bands of horsemen, Lombard or Bavarian, came riding through the Adige valley, trampling down the corn-fields and gardens of the hapless mountain people, harrying and pillaging their homesteads, and driving them to seek refuge far away among secluded valleys or uplands. These, however, are but guesses made probable by what we learn from history, but profitless if history were not by to confirm them.

Behind the Rosengarten peaks lies a fair land, rich in its contrasts of fertile field and barren rock, and in its magical brilliancy of contrasted colours. It is close to the great high road from Germany to Venetia, yet few travellers enter into it; and of those who have done so many return with tales of uncouth language, and scanty food, and hard lodgings, and such other hardships as the degenerate adventurers of our day encounter. Possibly they may have had a motive for exaggerating these drawbacks; at all events, those who know the country well and love it hope that the day may be far distant before hordes of rude western barbarians, members of the Alpine club and such as follow in their train, break down the invisible fence which has hitherto shut off intruders from this enchanted ground.

In Late Autumn.

Primrose and cowslip have I gathered here,
Anemone and hiding violet,
When April sang the Spring song of the year:
Now all is changed; the Autumn day is wet
With clouds blown from the West, and vapours fold
Over the dropping woods and vacant wold;
The latest flower of the field is dead;
The birds that sang to me are mute or fled,
Save one that like a larger berry clings
On the green holly bush, and sings and sings
A farewell to the sun that, low and pale,
Lightens a wild sky like a distant fire;
The wind beats on the tree-tops like a flail,
And strews the red leaves in the pools and mire.

CHARLES DENYS CONWAY.

October, 1869.

MAUDE'S FINGERS PAUSED ON THE KEYS FOR A SECOND.

Against Time.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Mr. Hempriggе sacrifices his Career to his Conscience.

FATE and Time weave each little incident of our lives in webs so complex that it is given to nothing short of omniscience to disentangle the minutest portion of individual threads. If Helen's nurse had dropped her in infancy, picking the child up with injured spine and fractured nose, what woes unnumbered would have been spared the world of her time. Paris would have travelled untempted, and Priam might have died happy. Trojan chiefs and Grecian heroes would have sunk unsung into forgotten graves; but we should never have been shocked with the crimes of Clytemnestra, or seen the Furies dogging the heels of Orestes. It was Helen's smiles drew Dido's tears. Her beauty seated the mistress of the world on the Seven Hills, wrote the history and raised the monuments that hallow the Eternal City, dowering it with its precious legacy of associations and ruins. So to this day Helen makes the fortunes of hotel-keepers and cicerones, and sends on their pilgrimage the hundreds of English families who winterly cluster themselves below the Pincian. If Buonaparte *fils* had been carried off by Corsican malaria, or Buonaparte *père* shot down in Corsican vendetta, what weeping and gnashing of teeth must have been spared the households of the century, what crowds of men who fell in war would have lived in peace, and how much picturesque mediæval architecture would have been spared to cumber the political map and block the march of ideas. If Luther had only seen his vocation in the sword instead of the gown,—but it is idle to multiply instances; and, just as much as Sirens of passion or thunderbolts of war and controversy, does the most insignificant shred of humanity twine itself through the chequered pattern of nobler existences.

A navvy, of intelligence something below the brute in the truck he loads, as the *suites* of some pothouse quarrel with a stoker, sends the

express his enemy stokes flying off the rails, and precipitates its passengers into eternity or the hospitals. One of them is the great Minister whose hand is extended to pluck the fuse from some great international question pregnant with peril: the bomb explodes, and half a dozen of thrones are shattered into fragments. Another is the savant who carries to his grave the secret that would have been the blessing of unborn generations. The engine-driver leaves a promising young family, and the orphans take to evil courses, the parish, the prison, and the hulks. The graceful girl, flying townwards full of love and hope, drives her head through the hat-box of the gentleman opposite, mars her beauty, gets jilted, churns all her milk of human kindness into gall, resigns herself to scandal and mischief-making, and dies detested, a soured old maid; while young Priceless, her struggling cousin, retained in that grand breach-of-promise case, makes the soul-stirring appeal to the jury that starts him on his rush to the highest place in his profession. All because Bill, the unlucky stoker, was unhappy in his family circle and preferred the tap-room at the "Railway Whistle" to the domestic hearth, and so a poor labourer's unlucky matrimonial choice may dismember an empire or make a Lord Chief-Justice of England.

And Lucy Winter's likings and Mr. Hemprigge's loves were matters of vital consequence, not only to Hugh Childersleigh and his kinsman George, but, had they only known it, to the numerous and influential shareholders of the Crédit Foncier of Turkey; to the clients and connection with whom that great establishment had its dealings at home and abroad; to capitalists who dictated their own terms to European treasuries; to contractors developing the resources of the East with the money of the West; to rayahs scratching long furrows on Bulgarian plains; to peasants grilling over their daily toil under Syrian palms.

With all his natural anxiety to put a period to his fidgeting suspense, in ordinary circumstances our friend Hemprigge was the very last man to snatch at fruit before he was sure it was mellow, to take a leap without looking well where he was likely to land. As we have had occasion to remark, his profound self-admiration did not blind him to the fact that it was not shared by Lucy as he could have desired; and with all his wish to anticipate a fancied rival, he would have been slow to force the running at the risk of being out of the race. It was an object with him, to be sure, the cutting short the idle extravagances his novel *rôle* of philanthropist involved him in. But he could not but be persuaded that his unassuming charity and unwearying benevolence were the surest allies he had found as yet; and in his appreciation of the benefits of lavish advertising, of the profits flowing from the puff direct, not even Solomons of the Cosmopolitan Clothes-mart, or Potter of the Essence of Life, were more on a level with the spirit of the times. However, the sagest man proposes in vain, and Hemprigge found his deep-laid plans deranged, his carefully-sorted hand forced and spoiled by the very individual whose unintentional help he and his counsellor Hooker had so confidently counted on.

One day after office-hours he bent his thoughtful way to "The Cedars," his pocket-book bulging with important memoranda relating to the affairs of the Orphanage; his heart glowing with the generous conception that trembled on his lips. He had found by expensive experiences the goddess he worshipped could best be propitiated by gifts, and the richer the presents the warmer the reception. To be sure the gifts she was so graciously grateful for were, so far as she was concerned, vicarious ones; lavished on her *protégées*, and not upon herself. Worse luck, her admirer told himself bitterly. Had it been otherwise, his free charity might have begun and ended in the home he fondly hoped they might one day share. This afternoon, however, saw him in high spirits. For the first time he had thought of appropriating to his own use one of those economically ostentatious ideas so popular among the beneficent; where charity accepts a bill at an indefinitely distant day, scrupulously guarding itself against having to meet it by a long succession of contingencies—an idea by which, in selfish violation of the precept, its right hand not only takes its left into its confidence, but all the world besides. In short, Mr. Hemprigge went prepared to pledge himself to a donation of 500*l.* to the struggling Hampstead institution, to be forthcoming on the understanding that forty-nine equally noble-hearted individuals should be found to follow his lead and commit themselves to a similar extent.

The servant would inquire if Miss Childersleigh was at home. One of the most unpleasant signs of his suit was that Hemprigge could never force the *consigne* of his idol's gate without a parley; could never flatter himself he stood on the footing of the friend of the family,—with its ladies at least. This time, however, the man quickly returned to beg Mr. Hemprigge to follow him. Miss Childersleigh was at home and would be happy to receive him. As they approached the door of the small drawing-room the rattle of cups told him the ladies were indulging in that unseasonable and unreasonable five-o'clock repast, so endeared to feminine eccentricity by habit and fashion that it swallows down the boiling beverage in the dog-days and fancies it likes it. With all his weaknesses Hemprigge was a rational and intelligent man, but he was a lover too, and, moreover, as we know, not overburdened with scruples in the means he chose to his ends, so he rather congratulated himself on finding the ladies so snugly and sociably disposed.

He stepped in with a more assured step than usual, a smile of honest satisfaction beaming on his face, and his manner artistically toned down to friendly but respectful familiarity. But he stopped his silky spring involuntarily for a second; it was so often his evil chance to find himself in company other than he bargained for. There was Sir Basil standing cup in hand upon the rug instead of occupying an identical spot on that of "Doodles'," as was his methodical custom of an afternoon, and to "Doodles'" his smiling guest would have been devoutly glad to have banished him at that moment. And there, in a comfortable arm-chair, rolled up between the fire and the sofa-corner occupied by Maude, lolled

Lord Rushbrook, his lordship looking every whit as much at home as Sir Basil.

"Why, Hemprigge," he exclaimed in a voice most cheerily hearty, and almost softened to affection, "what a delightfully unexpected surprise meeting you so shortly after my return, and at 'The Cedars,' too, of all places in the world!" But with all his warmth, his lordship did not raise by an inch the head that rested indolently on the low cushion, did not even uncross his leg or stretch out the hand that played with his teaspoon. Nothing short of the cordiality of the greeting could have carried off the incivility of the studied inaction.

Hemprigge felt it all, and smarted inwardly; indeed, he generally found himself on thorns when in contact with the affable Deputy-Governor, who seemed to know by intuition the secretary's sensitive points, and love to roll himself over them like a sleek cat with its claws out. As he saw him seated there, and heard once more the pleasant tones that always sounded to his fancy so sharp and so mocking, he marvelled how he and Hooker could ever have taken that very one-sided view of things; how they had ever duped themselves to dream of hope and luck in Rushbrook's presence at "The Cedars." Desperate men do catch at straws, but this, he told himself now, was the maddest instance of self-deception. For Hooker to argue so might be all very well: Hooker had neither his brains nor the secret of his relations with his lordship. For himself, when making his silky approaches to Lucy in the neighbourhood of the watchful Maude, he always felt like a novice walking the tight-rope; but with those mocking eyes of Rushbrook looking on as well, neither brains nor balance-pole could save him from grief. And if the other seriously proposed making Miss Childersleigh Lady Rushbrook, would he, of all men, if he could help it, tolerate his wife's bosom-friend giving her hand to Mr. Hemprigge? While he was stammering out his broken phrases to the ladies, and words of course to the gentlemen, his active mind was galloping over the ground we have just crossed more deliberately, and his sinking heart told him his cherished hopes were doomed to fatal failure. Yet all the time his stubborn nature sought defiantly to shake off the unwelcome conviction, and he came to a dogged determination to ask the long-considered question, for his own satisfaction, and have the matter settled out of hand and once for all.

"Why, Hemprigge," his lordship went on, rallying him pleasantly, "I have not seen you so absent since the day your zeal sent you on that unlucky business-trip to Killoden. To be sure, by the way, I haven't seen you at all. You look positively ill. You really must take care of yourself. Ah, professional enthusiasm will be the death of you if you don't take care, as I think Hugh Childersleigh warned you that morning in the Highlands. You overdo the interest you take in that fortunate Company of ours. Absolutely you think of nothing else."

"You do Mr. Hemprigge great injustice when you say so," interrupted Maude, good-naturedly coming to her visitor's assistance, who for some

reason or other was embarrassed and put out, as she saw. "We have good cause to know he has interest to spare for other things, or the prospects of our orphanage would have looked much blacker than they do."

"Yet that doesn't surprise me at all, I assure you. I have heard of Hemprigge coming to the assistance of orphans and minors too, before now," returned Rushbrook gravely, trying hard, although in vain, to catch the secretary's eye.

"He has done a great deal for ours," pursued Maude, with equal seriousness. "I don't know where we should have been now if he had not put his shoulder to the wheel when things seemed at a standstill. Do you, Lucy?"

"No, indeed!" assented that young lady warmly, detecting the irony in Rushbrook's tone, and feeling for the moment indignant at his injustice. Then, recollecting some obscure intimations of Hemprigge on the occasion of their last interview, she went on: "I have no doubt nothing but his good nature brought him here to-day; some happy idea to help us through our money troubles," and as she looked inquiringly at Hemprigge, he could not help reading more of encouragement in her looks than he had ever seen there.

Had that unlucky Rushbrook only stayed in Paris, or wherever else he had come from, what innocently unconscious warmth he would have thrown into the explanation of his generous conception. But it would chill the glow of a Howard, and check the charity of a Peabody, to be constrained to talk philanthropy raked by the sardonic grin of a Mephistopheles. However, there was no help for it: as his sarcastic friend had turned up, and apparently with no present intention of departing, it was no use whatever reserving his scheme, so he broached it accordingly, although, perhaps, in a more matter-of-fact manner than he might have done under circumstances more favourable.

"How very thoughtful you are, Mr. Hemprigge," exclaimed Maude, earnestly. "But I feel we are really taking advantage of you, in drawing so heavily on your money and your time for this selfish object of ours. You must have so many others with equal claims."

Lucy's face too had lighted up with hope and pleasure. By a rapid and simple act of mental arithmetic she had made the calculation that Mr. Hemprigge proposed to be their benefactor to the tune of 25,000*l.*, and she felt proportionately grateful.

"With all your other calls," she chimed in, and again her looks fanned Hemprigge's hopes into a flicker. At last she was becoming alive to the existence of the heart she had so persistently refused to believe in, and inclining in her remorse to make atonement for her cold-blooded scepticism.

The gentlemen were less touched with the trait of liberality.

"I don't know where Mr. Hemprigge looks to find those nine-and-forty liberal friends of his," growled Sir Basil. "I may profess to know something of Lombard Street at least, and I greatly question if a single man in it will be disposed to follow him in the list he heads. What we

can afford we give and without condition, in our straightforward business-like way."

With all his liking for Hemprigge, Sir Basil had been considerably scandalized at his presumption in coming to Hampstead at all to cap the banker's donation. He was indignant now at this indirect pressure, which might possibly lay him in the long run under further contributions, to the glory of Hemprigge and without any credit to himself. Hemprigge hastened to deprecate the indignation of his honoured host.

"Of course, Sir Basil, Lombard Street, as befits its great position, has done most liberally—always taking the lead in every generous work. But your unfailing charity there invites so many appeals, that just because you are always giving you must of necessity set limits to your bounty. Now with us new men it is quite a different thing. I fear," he proceeded, with a charming candour, "I fear the black sheep among us get us an evil reputation if they don't taint the flock. Somehow it is too rarely a man like me gets the chance of helping in a work like this, and I confess it is more seldom still we go out of our way to volunteer. But believe me," he added, turning appealing eyes on Miss Winter, for he saw hers following him with approval—"Believe me, we are not altogether the heathen fellows we seem. I'll do my best at least, to disabuse you by filling up this list from acquaintances of my own. If I fail, all I can say is, I shall be as much surprised as disappointed."

"I really fear you are an optimist, Hemprigge," broke in Rushbrook. "I do indeed. I should be the last man in the world to dash your hopeful enthusiasm, but I must say I can't quite agree with you in this. I see Miss Winter's face fall, and I'm grieved, I'm sure, to disenchant her of the faith in human nature you would teach. But to convince her that I'm honest at least, I'll bet——no, I won't bet on such a subject, and against my wishes too; but I'll gladly promise to come down with a sum of 500*l.*, or, say, a couple of them, when you have received the other seven-and-forty.

"I am quite sure you would never have made the offer, my lord, were you not in your heart as hopeful as Mr. Hemprigge;" and there was so much good faith in the beaming smile with which Maude accompanied the words, that, in spite of himself, he blushed guiltily, and looked nearly as much put out as Hemprigge had done the moment before.

That gentleman, quick to remark the enemy's confusion, and a good deal cheered by it, had produced his memorandum-book again, and was making an entry in it in a most matter-of-fact manner. "We shall claim your liberal promise before long, my lord," he said, with a confidence of manner that answered its purpose in imposing on the ladies; and then he naturally turned the conversation on the charity and its prospects. Rushbrook, on his best behaviour, carefully avoided any levity of tone, although he sat listening to the Honorary Secretary of the Orphanage with signs of growing impatience. Sir Basil had set down his cup and buried himself in the columns of the evening paper.

Rushbrook, indeed, had had more than enough of it. His colleague's talk moved him in a way very unusual with him. "Confound the fellow!" he muttered; "he's got through the business that brought him here; he's humbugged these girls more than enough; why can't he take himself off."

But Hemprigge had no idea of taking himself off just then, if he could help it; and although the presence of his lordship disconcerted him not a little, he had defiantly made up his mind it should not disturb his combinations. Although his agreeable conversation did not show a trace of impatience, yet his eye kept nervously glancing at the clock, watching the hands slowly working themselves round towards the hour that usually brought the appearance of the methodical Purkiss. Purkiss knew of his friend's intended visit and had given him assurance of coming to his aid. Hemprigge fully meant to be asked to stay to dinner; but Sir Basil evidently had no intention of doing it, and he greatly doubted the good nature or gratitude of Maude carrying her so far. Moreover, Rushbrook had only to change his seat to where he could catch her eye, and then the Manager felt there would not be a chance of it.

At last the longed-for step sounded in the passage, and Purkiss entered in an unusual rush of affability. For a variety of reasons he never looked so amiable as when pressing the hospitality of his home on his friend Hemprigge.

"Ah! Lord Rushbrook here. How do you do? Delighted to see you looking so well. And you too, Hemprigge: after what you said, I half hoped to find you. You have persuaded our friends to stay to dinner, Maude, I trust?"

"I shall be very glad indeed if they will, I'm sure," said Maude, speaking to Hemprigge, and looking at Rushbrook, and for once submitting without resentment to the awkward but irresistible pressure put on her by her brother.

"A thousand thanks," said the nobleman quickly; "with the greatest pleasure, if you will take me *sans façon*, and in morning dress."

"I should be delighted," answered Hemprigge, "did I not fear I was taking advantage of Miss Childersleigh's good nature?"

"The good nature is all on your side," returned Purkiss, with unwonted heartiness. "People who live out of the way like us are only too pleased to catch their friends as they can."

So the impromptu party was arranged; Sir Basil rousing from his paper, deigning to express his satisfaction, and stopping, later, on the way to his dressing-room, to exchange a word or two with the butler on the matter of wines.

The dinner passed off pleasantly enough; Rushbrook striving his utmost to efface any disagreeable impressions the ill-timed levity of his before-dinner talk might have produced on his hostess; struggling against his besetting sin, and especially careful to banish any irony from his manner, when in general conversation he answered the remarks of

Hemprigge. That gentleman, conscious that his evening's work might be a turning-point in his life, and that he would need courage, at least as much as tact, to carry him through with it, let the butler fill up his glasses oftener than was his wont, and recommended himself to Sir Basil after dinner by a closer application than usual to the venerable port. When they made the move to the drawing-room he was flushed—to steal a term from French cookery-books—*au point*, and felt himself not only equal to availing himself of opportunities, but to creating them if need were. But love and fortune stood his friends: Purkiss actively, Sir Basil passively, and Lord Rushbrook unwittingly, all three played into his hands. The former gentleman eclipsed himself on the way from the dining-room, disappearing up the stairs. His father disposed himself comfortably in his chair, and leaving the ladies to do the honours of the drawing-room to his guests, betook himself to dreamland. He did not often go to sleep after dinner, but when he did, as they all knew by experience, nothing short of violence could bring the baronet back to a consciousness of the realities of life.

As for Lord Rushbrook, he was to the full as bent on a few words with Maude as Hemprigge was eager to be alone with Lucy. But as his confidences had nothing to do with the gentle passion, there was nothing of consciousness to dash the hardihood with which he carried her off to the piano, discountenancing her suggestion of a duet. The instrument stood in the larger drawing-room, half out of sight.

"Pray play something noisy, Miss Childersleigh; plenty of execution, and as little *pianissimo* about it as may be," he whispered. "To be quite frank with you, I asked your music only to drown our talk."

Maude may have had suspicions of her own about what might possibly be coming. Her fingers trembled slightly as she busied herself among her music-books, and seizing without a word on the volume that came first to hand, she bent her head over the piano, and opened full cry in the hunter's chorus in *Der Freischütz*.

Lord Rushbrook may have guessed what was passing in her mind; for instead of taking prompt advantage of the crash, he hesitated in a way very unlike him. But as he caught a glimpse of Hemprigge's shadow falling on the opposite wall, his softening expression hardened back to decision and impatience.

"I'm going to test our friendship, Miss Childersleigh, and hazard losing myself for ever in your good opinion. It all depends on how you take what I'm going to say. At least, you must believe in my interest in you and all that concerns you, since it forces me to do an excessively disagreeable thing and one very much out of my usual way."

"The solemnity of your preface makes me tremble for what is to follow. What can you mean, Lord Rushbrook?"

"Don't laugh, when for once I'm grave enough. I mean to impart to you my very unflattering opinion of a guest of your father's, and speak evil behind his back of a friend of your brother's."

Maude's fingers paused on the keys for a second. "I can't pretend to misunderstand you. Mr. Hemprigge, of course."

"Precisely so; but pray play on. For your sake I don't desire he should overhear us or suspect we are discussing him. Not either for his or mine most certainly." He had come round to her side and was looking her in the face, and he drew himself up with a dignity she had never seen in him before, but yet Maude acknowledged to herself it sat strangely well on his careless features.

"I had thought," she returned, in a slightly disappointed tone,—"may I say I hoped?—that your light manner before dinner was assumed to cover your real sympathy with us?"

"You did me injustice, then, or more than justice, when you took for earnest the offer that both Hemprigge and I knew for sarcasm. To see him parading himself among the charitable would be enough to disgust any sensible man with charity for life. I happen to hate hypocrisy; yet to be frank, so far as I am concerned, he might have figured in Tartuffe as he pleased elsewhere. I am conscious of far too many peccadilloes of my own to go playing the knight-errant among other sinners and their vices. But when he has the brazen audacity to abuse your goodness in my presence, and clearly for some unworthy purpose, too, my indignation gets the better of my selfishness. Believe me, speaking as I speak now is the most painful and unselfish thing I have done for long. But I happen to know this man well, that he's one who always crawls for choice along crooked paths; and as I do know him, and you do not, it shall be no fault of mine if he leaves his trail here, or makes the boast that his craft has fooled your innocence."

"I think you do him injustice; very unintentionally I am sure," returned Maude, speaking doubtfully though. "Once I used to feel positive antipathy to him, perhaps I do not greatly like him now, but in spite of myself his recent conduct has overcome my prejudices and taught me to distrust my first impressions. You cannot know, of course, how delicately generous he has been, or anything of the endless trouble he has given himself about that orphanage he knew we were interested in. The more we have seen him, the better reason have we had to believe him very different from what we once imagined."

"From himself, Miss Childersleigh. Yes, precisely so. When Hemprigge calls himself as a witness to his own character, you may be sure there will be abundant testimony forthcoming to his excellences, and material proofs in plenty to back it with. To do him justice, he never grudges money when parting with it serves his ends, and yet when he can he always makes his brains save his purse. That latest trait of generosity of his—that conditional 500*l.*, was admirably characteristic."

"You will surely not try to persuade me, my lord, to put so uncharitable a construction on what may very well have been the charity I thought it," said Maude, appealingly.

"Be sure, Miss Childersleigh, had mine been merely suspicions, I

should have kept them to myself. On nothing short of absolute conviction would I wish to shake your faith in any man's better nature. It is just like you to speak as you do, but it puts me on my trial as well as Hemprigge, and of all the world I can least afford to have you condemn me, and for meanness too. I *must* convince you that you judge him by yourself, that it is your own nature that inclines you to put a favourable construction on his motives. Your good sense must tell you a man's whole life should speak for him, not the actions of a month. One swallow does not make a summer, and who ever heard before of Hemprigge doing one solitary good deed, or troubling his head about the well-being of any of his fellow-mortals?"

"Nay, it is, maybe, only your ignorance of him makes you do him an injustice. What he does, he does most unobtrusively, and this is but one of many——"

"Hemprigge do good by stealth!" Rushbrook laughed bitterly. "On my honour, the idea is too atrociously barefaced even for him, and to suggest it in a house where Hugh Childersleigh and I are visitors is most unlike his usual prudence. He must have strong reasons of his own for venturing a bold *coup*. Why, Miss Childersleigh, as we have begun with confidences, we must go on; and if my own character suffer in course of them, at least it will be some pledge for my sincerity. It was I who first brought Hugh and him together, and I have known him for years. He has made it his profession to seek out business, I will not say dishonourable, but certainly degrading, and more so by far for the agent than the client. As money-lender at five-and-twenty he had all the avaricious spirit of his trade, and while a spendthrift by taste, was always a miser at heart. What chance, do you think, had charity, when avarice and prodigality were struggling for his purse!"

"If this is all true,—and I cannot for a moment doubt it,—I agree with you that Mr. Hemprigge has been very much out of place here. I think besides——" She stopped, but her face finished the sentence.

"You think that we who know something of his character, are at least as much to blame as he. Well, perhaps so, and yet had I known either you or him one bit less than I do, had I not assisted at that display of unblushing impudence this afternoon, I for one should have been silent still. If society were not a general masquerade, believe me we should see but empty *salons*. Remember besides, a good many know, and a great many more suspect, all I have told you, and yet Hemprigge stands fair in the eyes of the world and fills, to universal admiration, the post of Manager to that Company of ours."

"How could your cousin, Mr. Childersleigh, ever stoop to associate himself so closely with a man like that?"

"Don't blame Hugh, or, if you do, recollect, at least, I am a hundred times more in fault, and with far slighter excuse. I had dealings with Hemprigge professionally, on lighter temptation, and took him up

socially for no reason whatever but my own passing amusement. I introduced him to my father's dinner-table, and presented him at my mother's receptions. Fortunately you have no idea, Miss Childersleigh, how susceptibilities get blunted with knocking about the world, and if a man like Hemprigge only push his opportunities with moderation, he may go a very long way. If certificates of virtue and honour were essential preliminaries to arranging business connections, forgery, I fear, would be a thriving trade; and Hemprigge came to Hugh's aid in a critical moment, much as despair used to raise the devil at one's elbow in the old legends. Besides Hugh knew him less then than he does now; I fancy were he altogether his own master, were it not for some gratitude he believes he owes him, he would be only too glad to shake him off at once and for ever."

"But what should have made it worth his while to act as he has been doing? What do you imagine brings him here?"

"Why,—that—I should be inclined to guess," returned Rushbrook, pointing to the shadows opposite. Lucy had moved, and now her shoulder cast its graceful outline on the wall below the stooping figure of Hemprigge. "Yet if it be so, it only buries the mystery deeper. Hemprigge parting with his money for charity's sake is odd enough, but his doing it in the idea of winning a portionless bride seems the very madness of extravagance."

"Lucy dream of marrying that man!" Maude burst out savagely, all her old hatred of him returning; "that would be wilder extravagance still, Lord Rushbrook. Believe me he never had the insolence to dream of such a thing; it would be sacrilege—profanity."

"Sacrilege and profanity: each and both of them, very likely," assented Rushbrook. "But in the eyes of that world we were talking of, the offer would be far from a bad one, and Hemprigge is not likely to set a lower value on himself than other people."

In an indifferent case, and before she had lived with Lucy and been lost in the clouds with Rushbrook, Maude most likely would have inclined to agree with the world and Mr. Hemprigge. Now she had begun to learn that there were things too holy to be made matter of merchandise.

She rose, and in the impulse of her indignation, prepared to sweep into the other room, but Rushbrook gently laid a finger on her arm.

"Take my word for it, you may leave our friend to Miss Winter. So long as she suspects nothing, there is no harm done; should he come to speak out, she will answer to the same purpose as you, although, perhaps, in milder terms. And if I might dare to counsel you, do nothing more than get rid of his benevolent co-operation and discourage his visits. When he sees the one and the other to be useless, rely upon it he will discontinue both. You need have no fear of a scene, for Hemprigge is the last man to court one, yet anything approaching it would be disagreeable to you, vex Sir Basil, perhaps hurt Hugh, and certainly pain Miss Winter. If you think differently, or can't answer for your feelings, let me

charge myself with the delicate commission of dealing with him, and I will do my best to manage it so as to atone for any mischief I may have made. Hush! Here comes the philanthropist at last to verify the old proverb."

All this time Mr. Hemprigge had been far too deeply engrossed in conversation of his own to trouble himself as to whether he was the subject of talk to others. He had been almost inclined to see a providence in the unexpected opportunity that had been made for him; yet he found it less easy than he could have supposed to use it, although his mind had been made up long before, his line of country surveyed, and his very speech prepared. Time pressed, for although Sir Basil was not likely to awake, or Mr. Purkiss to reappear, Maude might call Lucy to her side at any moment: yet as any abruptness on his part was almost certain to drive Lucy to take refuge with Maude, prudence and sophistry conspired to confirm his irresolution, and he began to fence and feint before delivering the assault, feeling bitterly all the time how fast the precious seconds were flying. He mounted on his old stalking-horse of philanthropy, but in his abstraction, what with snatches at its mouth and kicks in its ribs, the paces of the familiar animal became so spasmodic and eccentric, that Lucy, instead of being soothed to confidence, as she was intended to be, regarded the rider with surprise and some uneasiness. Had he been a shy man she really cared for, nothing could have served his purpose better; as it was, he saw with displeasure and disgust he was only startling her and putting her on the defensive. No man in his circumstances ever felt more certain he was rushing foolishly on his fate; but with a view to that future ease of his conscience we referred to before, he clung to his pet principle of exhausting every possible chance before resigning himself to failure as inevitable. Lucy from time to time kept glancing round at his face in a sort of curious fascination, cowering down in the intervals over the photographs scattered before her, like a scared pigeon ready to take flight at the first rude movement that should break the charm. With all her motherly interest in the clerks' orphans, it is to be feared she would have consented to a grave compromise of their interests, could she only have shaken off the earnest little gentleman at her elbow.

"Oh, no! Mr. Hemprigge, we could never dream of such a thing. We have given you far too much trouble as it is," she answered in random acknowledgment of some reckless proposal of her admirer's.

"You have, indeed, given me much trouble, Miss Winter, more than you know of," he broke out desperately, tenderly lowering his tone and glancing apprehensively at Sir Basil. "Your image has haunted me through many an anxious day and sleepless night; you have filled my sleeping and my waking thoughts, and you have——" and heaven knows how high or far his studied eloquence might have carried him, now that it was fairly wound up and going. But Lucy stared in his face with such candid fright, not to say horror, that he broke down in spite of himself

and came to a dead pause. The father of the orphan, the Hemprigge of the gentle heart and open hand, the much misunderstood philanthropist had vanished, and she was at bay before her old bugbear, with the looks she had shrunk from, speaking out boldly instead of whispering,—the admiration she had shuddered at in suspecting it, was actually avowed and outraging her.

"Hear me to the end!" he said, struggling with his rising fierceness, for in truth he hated her at the moment, and the storm of wounded pride and disappointment that had broken out within might have made a man of his self-control forget time and place, and yield to a wild outburst of passion. He mastered himself so far, but with evil eyes and set teeth he pled his cause in humble moving words, and his hissing voice tuned itself, as he spoke, into the whine of the professional mendicant run into operatic music by Offenbach.

With it all, had his face and his first tones not been a revelation, Lucy might have been touched. As it was, she was moved indeed, although very differently, and in her terror and aversion found it hard to check the impulse to rush to Sir Basil and claim his protection. She managed somehow, however, to give Hemprigge the answer he expected, and assuredly if he wanted his conscience made easy on the score of possible mistakes, her manner ought to have given him as effectual satisfaction as he could have desired.

He would have given much to have closed the interview with a few friendly words, but for the life of him could not help paying her an instalment of revenge in exchange for the involuntarily honest expression of her countenance; he could not resist leaving with the lady of his longings a *souvenir* that should rankle in her gentle heart. If she repaid his love with hate, he would assure himself, at all events, a sympathy of suffering.

"Don't think you can delude me, as, perhaps, you do yourself, Miss Winter. I know what and who it is that stands between us; perhaps it might be better for all three if I did not!"

"I only understand this much, sir, that you intend me gross insult and outrage. I ought to have looked for nothing else at your hands!" returned Lucy, rising to her feet, flushing indignantly, and then becoming very pale.

Hemprigge's passion for once had fairly got the better of him, but the prudence he had so long practised and so devoutly worshipped, came to his help at last, although rather late. He had grown almost as white as Lucy, as he thought of the personal consequences of the warm-tempered Lord Rushbrook becoming the young lady's champion, and as Sir Basil moved in his chair, he was reminded of all the remoter contingencies this idle *imbroglio* might involve him in. Had her indignation breathed the sweetest hopes to him, it could not have soothed him more suddenly. There was a gentle melancholy in his speech that should have woke an echo of pity in the breast of a saintly inquisitor or Indian brave. Yet Lucy listened to it implacably, although it brought her a certain comfort

in telling her the echoes of the storm were dying away and clearing the air for the moment.

"I leave you, Miss Winter; and more agonizing even than the blow you deal me will be the feeling that the madness of my love has ruined me, and irretrievably, perhaps, in your good opinion. The pangs of my remorse might deserve your pardon in time, but never, never shall I forget my fault or forgive myself." His ringed fingers swept his delicate cambric handkerchief over his fine eyes: it was not for nothing he had sat in theatre stalls at the feet of our cleverest actors. An intelligent man is always picking up something even in the midst of his pleasures; only novices when they first tread the boards generally sin on the side of extravagance.

He discreetly withdrew himself, expanded his features, straitened his person, and strutted into the other room. Although something paler than usual, he looked very much himself when he entered it. Had he been able to read in Maude's heart, or in Rushbrook's indeed, perhaps on the whole he would rather have prolonged his *tête-a-tête* with Lucy; but Rushbrook, a man of the world like himself, put a force on his feelings, and chivalrously thrust himself forward to bear the brunt of the onset. He did not pretend cordiality, and showed nothing of his usual light and rallying manner: an unpleasant sign, as Hemprigge's shrewdness told him. He simply talked easily and loudly till he woke Sir Basil, and Purkiss descended on the scene. Hemprigge, on his side, did his best, but Maude's silence and coldness could not have escaped him, even had he not intercepted the looks that passed between her and Lucy. After all, what did it signify now? They only waited his going to exchange confidences as well; that evening's work he knew had shaken for once and for ever the footing he had made himself with so much pains at "The Cedars." He took his leave as soon as he decently could, and had scarcely the patience to communicate to his importunate friend Purkiss, who followed him out on the gravel, the evil end of all his manœuvring. Of one thing he had assured himself, that he owed Rushbrook something more for friendly offices, and he made a mental memorandum of the debt, to be paid off among others, when friendly fate should send him the means of a general settlement with his creditors.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

And suffers accordingly.

The shock of his disappointment over, as might have been expected in a man of his eminently practical turn of mind, Mr. Hemprigge sought comfort in labour, and in his blighted love fell back on what served him for religion. He had the heartfelt conviction that nothing is so satisfying as gold, so long, at least, as you go on winning it; that there are no plasters like bank-notes for bleeding hearts, and the higher their figures

the more sovereign the specific. Laying bare to Purkiss Childersleigh his motives for the match he aspired to, he had taken care to vindicate the consistency of his principles, and had soothed any twinges of his conscience, by professing to court in the portionless Lucy the embodiment of connection and extended credit. Yet, after all, a man trained as he had been, in a class that believed in little but tangible profits and quick returns, must have resigned himself with some misgiving to the guidance of broader views at so critical a turning-point of his career as matrimony. To lock up his heart in unnegotiable securities, to fetter his hand till death should knock off the handcuffs, and without receiving the solid dowry that should carry conviction of the prudence of the proceedings, was a grave step indeed; one that could hardly fail to be fruitful of anxieties and misgivings. Rejected by Lucy, he was a free agent again, and one would have said the very man to console himself with the proverb that there were better fish in the sea than had ever come out of it. Yet any one in his secrets—Hooker, for instance—would have said his conduct was that of the timid gambler, who, seeing the heavy stake he thought himself on the point of winning slip through his fingers, should of a sudden change his nature and take to the most reckless play with what remained to him of his own.

Hemprigge, to all seeming, was assiduous as ever in the affairs of the Crédit Foncier, but he no longer concentrated his joys on the profits he netted in that establishment, or bounded his hopes with its horizon. Lothbury is in the immediate vicinity of the Stock markets, and he relaxed from his more strictly professional work, in brief intervals, when he was wont to make stealthy dashes into his brokers' chambers in Throgmorton Street. He came to engross the lion's share of the time and thoughts of Messrs. Sharpe and Merryleg, who enlisted themselves heart and soul as jackals in ordinary to his majesty. That is to say, instead of waiting, in the constrained etiquette of their brethren of the older school, for clients to come to them with instructions for legitimate investments, they made it their business to prowl the Stock Exchange and its purlieus, sniffing up tainted intelligence, and hunting out shreds and scraps of secret information from dark and dirty corners. They were great in advising on time-bargains,—the buying stock you have no idea of holding on the chance of selling it at a profit a little later; or the selling what you do not possess in the prospect of being able to pick it up at lower prices when the day comes for fulfilling your contract. Time-bargaining is evidently a taste addressing itself very strongly to cupidity, the love of excitement, and all the springs of individual happiness and national greatness. Moreover, like dram-drinking, bric-a-brac hunting, and opium-smoking, it is a liking that grows with the indulgence. If you lose, the chances are you persevere to retrieve your losses, each step plunging you deeper in the holding clay, and making your extrication more hopeless; if you win, from that hour, of course, it is all over with you.

Hemprigge began winning, and went on winning largely. Things in

general were still on the rise, although not altogether so buoyant as they had been. If you only stuck by the time-honoured rule of the Stock Exchange, and distributed your eggs in a multiplicity of baskets—the rule that made such wild work later with the votaries of limited liability—you were pretty sure to find most of the brittle ware delivered safe on settling-day, and the breakages were but a small per-centage of the profits. Hemprigge was a shrewd judge of securities himself; and his advisers, although short-sighted like most of their fraternity, could yet look pretty sharply into the future for ten days or a fortnight in advance. Moreover, his position took him naturally a good deal behind the scenes; supplied him the means of bartering valuable information, and he generally had in reserve a number of insecurities absolutely safe to him because "meant" to rise. With his accustomed modesty, he sought to conceal this new source of gain from his colleagues, and in especial from Childersleigh. Sharpe and Merryleg were warned to silence, and bound to it by their interest; and as his transactions extended and multiplied themselves, Hemprigge took to conducting them through different sets of brokers, by the intervention of the faithful Hooker.

"I don't like it, I tell you. It's a clear tempting of Providence. You've got hold of one first-rate thing; why not stick to it instead of going and burning your fingers with irons you know little or nothing of?" So spake that venerable minister when first consulted. "It's like a thimblerigger playing at another man's table," he added, with much more truth than civility.

But Hemprigge, with the wisdom of the serpent, wasted no breath in convincing him. He simply drew a memorandum-book from his pocket, and submitted for his inspection some of its eloquent little pages. As Hooker read, his eyes lighted as Ali Baba's may have done when he stumbled on the treasure of the forty thieves, and his conversion was absolute and instantaneous. Thenceforth he not only patted his enterprising friend on the back, but insisted in sharing his ventures, expatiating with rare fluency on the beauty of the alchemy which could turn breath to gold, and make a simple order to a broker yield a rich return. Indeed he became almost officiously zealous in transmitting to his partner and principal the information he made it his daily business to gather from the brokers. He still, for prudential reasons, denied himself the entrance of the establishment in Lothbury, contenting himself with standing fondly at gaze from the corner of the Bank, and indulging in his mental raptures at that respectful distance. But the liveried giant by the portals came to know the look of his wafered despatches, and to curse their frequency, and the lighter Mercuries of the establishment were always flying with them up the broad carpeted staircase that led to the room of the Managing Director:

"*Immediate and confidential.* 11.15 A.M.

"M. and S. assure me Sallymanky's people selling Spanish. Rumours of new loan coming out in Paris . . . H."

Naturally Mr. Hooker's education had been thoroughly British, and he frequently tripped himself up in the intricacies of those foreign names he had come in contact with, late in life.

"*Immediate.* 12.25 P.M.

"Queensland Acclimatation landed a herd of Alpakkas; all well. Telegraph from Moreton Bay—No one believes it yet, but shares hardening. J. B. & Co. *knows* it to be true."

And so on with news and rumours of news; tales of war and peace; payment or non-payment of accruing dividends; company concessions and colonial bankruptcies: three-fourths of them *canards*, it is true, but most of them winged to answer their purpose, and hold their flight over next settling-day. Hooker and Hemprigge were growing wealthy, but their very good fortune became their stumbling-block, and their riches ruined them. They were creating capital so fast—capital they had so little call for in their easy way of trade—that the question as to how they were to dispose of it gradually became more pressing. Amidst all his gripping and getting, Hooker's essential prudence whispered him wisely:

"It's no use leaving all this money we're getting, only to fatten our bankers. I'll tell you what it is—I'm for putting it out of the way against a rainy day; for running it off into a sort of reserve fund. What do you say to houses now, or land in the suburbs?"

"What do I say? why, that the time may come for that late, when things get fishy, when some of these queer concerns in the City begin to look shaky. But there's not a sign of it as yet, and I'm not going to bury my money away in the earth, or build it into houses, so long as I can have eight per cent. on rising shares at selling prices."

"You are going to sink more of it in the Crédit Foncier of Turkey then?"

"Bother the Crédit Foncier of Turkey. No; most certainly not. On the contrary, while its shares are so high, I mean to follow the Governor's example, sell; and if you take my advice, you'll do the same, as I recommended you once before. In fact, I begin to doubt if it's worth my while sacrificing all my time to it for my paltry salary. Look at that robber Childersleigh pocketing commissions for himself, and the whole Board as well,—and if I do leave it ——"

"Leave it! nonsense. Salaries like yours are not to be had for the asking."

"Well, that's not the question now. At all events, its shares have moved very little in the last two months, while others have been steadily on the rise. The Suburban Discount for instance: they talk of its declaring a fifty per cent. dividend at the next meeting—perhaps a bonus."

"It might be the best thing we could do to shift about a little, if we were very sure of our ground," assented Hooker; and the result of this conversation, and subsequent ones, was the embarkation of the realized capital of the allies on board a variety of craft, with top-hamper out of all proportion to the ballast, as no one knew better than Hemprigge.

But then he believed in his luck; and what is a still more common thing with speculators of his class, he overrated his nerve and resolution. For avarice and superstition lie at the root of all speculation, and make it the hardest thing in the world to argue yourself into an absolute sacrifice, or to confess to a broken vein of luck. Hemprigge had invested pretty freely in the Suburban Discount; the rather that Rifler, the Manager, was an intimate of his own. But, on a memorable morning, one of the Crédit Foncier messengers came skimming along the corridor, bearing one of Hooker's most pressing despatches.

"Suburbans falling. That villain Rifler bolted, they say—see me at once. Not a moment to be lost."

Hemprigge opened and read it, standing with his face to the window, and then set himself steadily to disbelieve it. An untoward incident like this was so utterly out of all his fortunate experience. Keeping a keen look-out, he had seen no immediate symptoms of impending commercial convulsion, and as for the Suburban Discount, he had gone over all its books and accounts most carefully with his friend Rifler. He breathed between his teeth a fearful anathema at that gentleman—provisionally—and then turning to the clerk, who had been writing to his dictation when the missive arrived, said, very quietly,—

"Just have the goodness, Mr. Driver, to go on with those letters and have them ready for me to sign; should any one ask for me, say I have been called out for half-an-hour on official business;" then picking up his hat and gloves, he walked out of the room. But in the comparative gloom of the corridor, a cloud settled on his spirits, he felt rather less sanguine, and, trying in vain to stifle the whisper of superstition that told him his luck was on the turn, viciously tore one of his gloves to shreds, and walked past the porter with a pleasant smile and most unconcerned demeanour.

But Hooker's information was at least as accurate as usual. Rifler, while confiding his company's secrets and baring his own bosom to his boon companion Hemprigge, had already feathered himself a snug nest in Sweden with down stripped from the shareholders of the Suburban. To elude all suspicion, he had taken a week's holiday and a passage under a feigned name, and the Hull and Stockholm steamer Odin had carried him beyond the reach of inconvenient extradition treaties. Now he was domesticated with his English billiard-table, groom and gamekeeper, and his French cook, in a spacious mansion on Lake Wener. Rifler had always had a distaste for society and a passion for wild-fowl shooting, and it had only been a "mucker" on the Leger and his uncle the chairman that had forced him on the Suburban. When Hemprigge stood between the swing-doors opening on the Stock Exchange from New Court, the 10*l.* shares of that Company, selling at 47 the evening before, had already dropped 14, and were steadily declining. Yet the alarm had scarcely spread westwards to St. James's Street, and never touched the country.

"Most unfortunate! Who could have dreamed it? But sell at once, of

course, and have done with it, Mr. Hemprigge," gasped Merryleg, who came trotting up to him.

"Sell, of course," echoed Hemprigge's common sense, and had he only listened to it, the 2,000*l.* he must have sacrificed would have been the most profitable outlay he ever made in his life. "Those fellows are always hankering after their commissions," whispered Avarice; "the Company is sound, their loss is discounted, hold on for a rally." Had he made up his mind to that first step backwards, which would have cost—certainly cost 2,000*l.*—and then withdrawn quietly in the same prudent direction, cutting loose from everything suspicious, and falling back on Consols, or even the Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey, the defaulting Rifler would have proved the best friend he ever knew. But, listening to the tempter, he held on, and doing so, entered on a fatal line of policy where the descent was easy and the recovery hard; took up the hammer that was to nail the colours he should have struck, and struck the match that was to fire the magazine. And Hooker, with the inward spasms of a careful servant who once carried his quarterly earnings to a savings' bank, and in much mental agony, was persuaded to follow his leader.

The momentous decision of the morning made both of them miserable men. So long as all goes well, the fever of speculation is a delicious glow, one of the most agreeable excitements in the world; but the shuddering-fits that follow a reaction chill your very marrow, as you sit Marius-like among your crumbling investments, musing remorsefully over losses and mistakes, looking wistfully back at past prosperity, and labouring in vain to readjust the scales of unsatisfactory balances. The savage shareholders of the Suburban altogether declined to let Rifler carry off the sins of the Board into the wilds of Sweden; held an indignation meeting, when they sent the Directors packing after their would-be scapegoat, replaced them with distinguished members of their own body, and these new brooms, despairing of cleansing this Augean stable, threw up their hands in despair and let all the world into its foul secrets. Confidence once disturbed, tore rents in the balloon of credit that gradually enlarged themselves; other Companies began to get talked about; and the Bank of England sounded the alarm from its parlour, and raising its rate of discount week after week, shook the foundations of the mushroom establishments that had been underselling it and luring its customers. Lord Richborough and the dignitaries of Lombard Street began to crow, and, with their cheery "I told you so!" volunteered Job's consolation to the more advanced and embarrassed speculators of their acquaintance.

The Crédit Foncier and Mobilier of Turkey did not go altogether unscathed, and Hugh Childersleigh had begun to have his anxieties as well as Hemprigge. The rise in the shares was checked, and then they began to sink a little in sympathy with other Companies. His faith in its ultimate prospects was not shaken for an instant, but he congratulated himself, in his special circumstances, that he had been wise in time, and reduced his great holding when markets were at their best. Yet now the

policy of candour began to bear its fruits, and Hemprigge's early predictions to fulfil themselves. People who shook their heads incredulously at most things of the sort, continued to place some faith in the ample reports and lucid balance-sheets of the Crédit Foncier of Turkey. The shareholders still were always welcomed there, to find the Directors more affable and communicative than ever. Its transactions, moreover, had been, on the whole, so prudently conducted, it had engaged its credit so intelligently, had made its advances on such prudent margins of security, that by comparison at least it only gained by publicity. While some of its rivals were left with none but their profitless customers on their hands, with the sad option of closing their doors or throwing good money after bad, its connection actually increased. But, for the moment, dearer money and shaken faith dealt a heavy blow to the system of reckless financing, and it seemed likely next half-year would see a woeful melting of those commissions Hemprigge had grudged so to the Governor.

"Do you propose taking up that *Pera Lighting and Drainage*, Mr. Childersleigh?" asked Hemprigge one morning, when he had come to the Governor's room for the formal discussion of the business of the day. Although they worked about as harmoniously as a pair of spaniels hunting the covers in couples, yet their common duties forced them to lay their heads together once at least in the twenty-four hours.

"Certainly not, so far as I have a voice in the matter."

"It would be an excellent thing for you," returned Hemprigge, with the most innocent of faces, resting a slight emphasis on the last word—an emphasis that did not escape the other. For some time past he had carefully avoided any more direct allusion to Hugh's match with time, and the forthcoming opening of the will.

Hugh affected to take no notice of the intimation that separated his interests from the Company's. He had learned to control his temper up to a certain point, which the other guessed at, and usually, in his prudence, took good care not to pass.

"Nothing that locks up the capital we must keep at call can possibly be a good thing in these times. At present, and as long as I can influence the action of the Board, I shall set myself against any commitments of the kind."

"The labourer is worthy of his hire," rejoined Hemprigge mildly. "Your bare salary, without these magnificent commissions you have been drawing, would be miserable remuneration for the time and services of a man like you."

Hugh looked at him in a way that told him he had gone dangerously far. So long as the Governor restrained himself from giving his feelings vent in speech, it was quite immaterial how much of them his face expressed. Now-a-days there was little room for secrets between the two.

"You need not tell me that many men in my place, and in yours"—(he paid back the insulting accent on the pronoun)—"go on the principle

of *après nous le déluge*. If the flood is to come, and I think it highly probable, I don't intend the shareholders shall be swamped if I can save them. To remind you of your words when we first broached the scheme, I mean it to outlast both of us."

"To outlast me, I don't doubt, if you had your will, my friend," thought Hemprigge. "A great deal has passed since then, Mr. Childersleigh," he said aloud with a sigh, "and I am sure the shareholders ought to rely absolutely on your prudence and forethought. By the way, though, talking of that and the deluge, I hear some of them grumbling about your building an ark for yourself, saying, that if the Governor is selling his shares, it's time for them to be taking to the boats."

"My parting with some of my shares was done openly and aboveboard. To my colleagues I made no secret of my reasons, and how honest these were you know better than any one, if you choose to say. Certainly, as it has turned out, it was a good thing I sold when I did, but as much so for the shareholders as for myself. If the Governor were compelled to sell in the times I fear next summer, it would be casting our credit to the dogs, and our stock to the bears!"

"Oh, don't think I have any doubt you acted for the best, Mr. Childersleigh; but the shareholders are not so deep in your secrets, and talk they will. They say the bears are sniffing at the property already, and all owing to those unlucky sales of yours. I tell them they have really no cause of complaint; that every man has a perfect right to do what he will with his own; that even a Governor, however much he may have drawn from an association like this, need hold nothing more in it than his legal stake. But I cannot boast of having convinced them, and I thought it my duty to tell you so."

"Thank you. I shall take the needful steps to disabuse them of their erroneous impressions. And forgive me, but as your line of defence seems hardly so well chosen as it was undoubtedly well intended, may I ask you to be silent on the subject in future?—otherwise I should be under the necessity of appealing from your unfortunate advocacy to the Board, perhaps even to a general meeting of the Company. Moreover, as what you tell me strongly increases my feeling of personal responsibility, I shall look in future to be consulted on all transactions, even the most trivial; and as that, I believe, disposes of our business, I'll return, if you will allow me, to the correspondence you interrupted."

The speech sounded more like a defiance to open war than anything Hemprigge had heard from him. The imperious tone, still more the harsh order about the reference of everything to the Governor, hurt his pride, and perhaps it interfered with his arrangements as well as trenching on his prerogative as Manager. For the moment he felt inclined to accept it as a challenge, and fight the battle out, when the standing-ground was tolerably good. But second thoughts brought safer counsel. It was a dangerous thing engaging such an adversary on a doubtful chance of victory; for now that Hemprigge was getting worked in among

the complex wheels he had set in motion in the City, he held with a desperate tenacity by the Crédit Foncier of Turkey, and would have regarded his dismissal from the post of Managing Director as a crowning calamity. So he thought better of it, and turned quickly to leave the room, certainly not hating Hugh more than when he entered it, but with much strengthened conviction that, sooner or later, one or both of them must go to the wall.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Lucy makes a Scene, and Maude a Discovery.

No one can be infidel enough to doubt that ladies whose unlucky lot it is to reject the affections they have won, feel all the sympathy they profess for the sufferings of which they have been the cause. Yet with its regrets and remorse, it is not in the most angelic feminine nature to be insensible to the glory of involuntary triumphs; to think, without some thrill of pleasure, on the sorrows of its victims. There are women, of course, who hunt down hearts for the sheer pleasure of the sport, and parade their bruised and bleeding trophies as a veteran Indian carries at his belt the scalps he has torn away in a score of razzias. We suspect there are few of the sex who can resist gratifying a pardonable vanity by taking some one into the secret of the tribute paid their fascinations; who have the strength of kindness to do the best they can for their lover next to accepting him, and consign to oblivion the episode he unpleasantly figured in. Unless an offer be so wild as to amount to an insult, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the gentleman may find comfort in thinking he has left pleasant memories with the lady to whose happiness he would have consecrated his life. But surely Lucy Winter had singular ill-luck. If some generous fairy had dowered her at her christening with a rare gift of fascination, a malevolent one must have crossed the boon, willing that the attachments she inspired should end in nothing but bitterness to all concerned. If poor George Childersleigh's unhappy love threatened to cost her the pleasant home she had banished him from, and the friends who had come to her aid in the hour of her desertion, Mr. Hemprigge's proposal left her a prey to devouring anxieties about the man she insisted on regarding as her earliest benefactor. That prudent gentleman, who valued more than any one the beauties of a meek temper and long-suffering spirit, would have deplored even more than he did his foolish outbreak of anger, had he foreseen how deeply it would impress his lady-love. Lucy could not forget the malignant virulence of his covert threats, and was haunted, sleeping and waking, by the look which accompanied them. It was no passing fit of passion she was assured; she never, for an instant, doubted his

earnest sincerity of purpose, nor did she in the least question his capacity in heart, brain, or conscience to plan and carry through a revenge. The suddenness with which he had changed his language and calmed his manner terrified her, and she shuddered after him as at a rattlesnake who had sprung his rattle and then glided silently off on an errand of mischief. Although she had told Maude all else that had passed between them, she had said nothing of the words that were fretting in her mind. She blushed even to herself when she recalled them, and moreover she guessed at something of Maude's old relations with Hugh. She brooded over the word till they wore her spirits; her health and much of her old gaiety had gone with George Childersleigh, and now Hemprigge had plunged her in absolute gloom. Maude rallied and petted her by turns, tried to cheer, coax, and question her, all in vain, became hurt at last, and had her fits of coldness, although they never lasted long. Her penetration told her her friend had a secret she refused to share.

The struggle in Lucy's mind grew harder and harder. Hugh Childersleigh, she knew well, had bent his powers and devoted his life to a single aim, renouncing for it pleasure and society and political ambition. A few months more must decide his success or failure. She scarcely sympathized with him as she wished, yet she would have made any sacrifices to help him. Now accident had offered her the occasion. She had learned there was a man at his elbow, and deep in his confidence, who asked nothing better than to thwart him, and assuredly would do it if he had the chance. From what Maude had told her of Rushbrook's talk, she was aware, indeed, the Governor had not so high an opinion of the Managing Director as she might otherwise have believed, but that was very different from knowing him for his secret enemy. In the candour and purity of her nature she knew little of the essential oil of hypocrisy that keeps the wheels of the world in working order, and would never have persuaded herself a man she admired, as Childersleigh, could live in outwardly amicable intercourse with any one he had reason to suspect and distrust. Yes, the more she thought it over, the more was she driven up to the conclusion, that duty, to say nothing of friendship or common gratitude, made it imperative she should warn Childersleigh; that the thing must be gone through with, and each day she delayed it a crime, and, perhaps, an irreparable one. And now he came so rarely to the house that there seemed nothing for it but to write. She would set herself to the task with the conscientious resolution of a martyr; then her courage would ooze away, and each succeeding failure make the ordeal more difficult. The touch of the pen covered her face with blushes, and set her pulses beating as if they would burst her temples; her ideas went whirling round her brain, and down went the pen again in sheer despair. For she knew her warning would be idle unless she gave Childersleigh convincing proof of the deep-rooted inveteracy of his enemy. How persuade him of that without

telling him more than she would have cared to tell a mother, not only the offer—that was matter of indifference to her—but why his own name should have been brought up between them at all?

While the conflict was at its worst, the announcement that Hugh was coming to dine with them in a day or two gave her a reprieve. She tried to persuade herself she would tread the delicate ground much more safely when talking to him face to face, ready to advance or retreat, and in the meantime she found comparative repose. But she passed the afternoon of the dreadful day as the criminal who counts the minutes to a shameful punishment, and took her seat at dinner like a guest who had been fetched from the torture-chamber to be dressed for the banquet. Her eyes lighted up with fever, and a hot spot burned on each of her pale cheeks. Maude had taken fright and done her best to persuade her to keep her room. Even Sir Basil, not usually very observant, remarked her appearance, and said kindly, "Lucy, my dear, how wretchedly ill you are looking. Have a glass of wine? Here, Barnes, a glass of sherry to Miss Winter instantly; or stay, she likes Madeira. Go down for a bottle of March's East Indian."

Purkiss himself said something civil, and, perhaps, meant it; and it was with ill-concealed anxiety that Hugh, who had kept his eyes on her ever since he seated himself opposite, exclaimed:—

"Is it wise in you to be here at all, Miss Winter? I wish we could prevail on you to leave us."

Lucy smiled faintly, just managed to say she did not feel very well, and then rising hastily beat a speedy retreat. Maude followed, but only to have her affectionate inquiries parried with kisses, thanks, and generalities about headaches; so she reluctantly left her friend to the care of the maid, and returned downstairs thoughtful and much perturbed.

"Nothing very serious the matter, is there, Maude?" asked Sir Basil. "She certainly seems very far from well."

"She insists it's only a headache, but I don't like it. It's quite a new thing her having headaches at all, and she has been looking miserable for the last fortnight. However, I have ordered her to bed, which is the best thing for her in the meantime; and I've threatened her with the doctor, if she is not better before night."

"I should send for him in any case," said Hugh gravely.

"You don't think her seriously ill?"

"I do, indeed, or at least that she will be if she is not looked to forthwith. There is no mistaking the symptoms of fever. It needs no doctor to foretell a violent attack if something is not done."

"God bless me!" exclaimed Sir Basil; "do you really think so? Here, Barnes"—he went on, turning to the butler—"send a groom over with my compliments to Dr. Selby, and beg him to come without a moment's delay. What, you're going upstairs again, are you, Maude? Quite right, quite right; say I've sent for the doctor, and see that she keeps herself quiet till he comes."

The three gentlemen made a very silent meal. Hugh was taciturn, and eat as little as he said; and Sir Basil quiet and anxious, although his anxiety did not impair his appetite. As for Purkiss, his feelings were not sufficiently tried to tax his philosophy, and he disposed of the successive dishes, from the soup to the olives, in his usual methodical and business-like manner.

Lucy had gone to bed, but not to rest or sleep. She was in an agony of remorse that she should have let this chance, too, slip through her fingers; that, instead of managing quietly, she should have made a scene, and that her task was become more difficult than ever. But in her despair, she so far overcame her repugnance, that she resolved to have done with concealment the moment she regained her strength and collected her ideas. When Maude came up, and establishing herself by her pillow, told her how thoroughly she had alarmed them all downstairs; that the doctor was actually sent for, and might be with them at any moment; she shut her eyes, and took the plunge.

"It is you, and not Dr. Selby, who can help me, Maude," she burst out; and then with confused excuses and broken sentences, that were still intelligible enough, she whispered in her friend's ear all she had omitted from her former story.

"But why on earth make a mystery of all this from me at least, you foolish child?" exclaimed Maude. "As if it had been you, and not that wretch who had done something to be ashamed of." Then she stopped, smiled, blushed at an idea that seemed to shoot across her brain, and ending by looking thoughtfully at Lucy.

"Well, the first thing to be done," she resumed after a time, "is to lift off your mind all this weight that has been crushing it so long and so unnecessarily; but it only serves you right for having any secrets from me. Besides, although I daresay Hugh Childersleigh knows this man better than you suppose, I quite feel that, for the ease of your own conscience, we must send him a warning. If you like to trust me, I'll charge myself with the explanation, and make it to-night."

"Yes, that will be best. But now that my folly has attached so much importance to it, what can he think?"

"The worst he can think is,—that Mr. Hemprigge was outrageously insolent, and you absurdly sensitive. You may trust yourself to me, as you ought to know, although it would seem you had forgotten it. At least, I shall have all my wits about me, which is more than I should answer for you; and in the meantime, I shall answer for your cure, and spare you with the doctor and his cross-examination."

Maude had no difficulty in finding the opportunity she sought for. Unlike Sir Basil, Hugh appeared by no means satisfied with the bare assurance that the invalid was so much better that the doctor might be countermanded.

"I wish I saw you more alarmed, Maude. I can quite understand it is one of those nervous illnesses people are slow to confess to; but

surely it would be wiser to be on the safe side, and have Selby to see her."

"I should think so, I assure you, were I not certain Lucy was round the corner, and in the fair way to convalescence. She has confided to me her complaint. I pledge myself to set it all to rights; and I hope you don't doubt my word or skill. But you have reason to be uneasy about her, as you are the cause of it all."

"Forgive me, Maude, but the matter is too serious for trifling. And how can I possibly have anything to do with Miss Winter's illness?"

At the same time his heart fluttered a little, and with all his unfeigned concern not altogether unpleasantly.

"You directly, and indirectly your friend Hemprigge. I can hardly forgive you, Hugh, for ever bringing that man here. However, I daresay you have more cause than any of us to regret making his acquaintance, so I shall say no more about that. He hates you, Hugh; and that is what Lucy found out, and the foolish child has been frightening herself to death about it ever since."

"I have long known he does not like me. But how should Miss Winter come to guess it? and why should she have hesitated to tell me, if she had interest enough in me to induce her to take the matter to heart at all?"

"She had it from his own lips and looks. Oh, she has told me all: so you may believe me, if there is anything in his enmity to alarm you, there is good ground for alarm."

"If Miss Winter is intimate enough with Mr. Hemprigge to share his inmost secrets, I must say I think she is bound to keep them to herself," rejoined Hugh gloomily.

Maude began to appreciate Mr. Hemprigge's perspicacity, and to fear that, on the whole, although placed in an awkward dilemma, she could serve her friend better by over-candour than excess of caution.

"Don't start at shadows, Hugh. You know, as well as I do, there can be nothing whatever in common between the two. It is sullying Lucy to name her in the same breath with him. If he forgot himself, it was because she showed her disgust only too frankly."

Hugh muttered something between his teeth, and his brow got dark.

"It seems he has had the audacity to admire her for long, and the other evening ——"

"Stop, Maude. It is very clear Miss Winter would have given much to keep all this to herself, and it cost her bitterly to unbosom herself, even to you. You must see it would be the grossest indelicacy and ingratitude were I to add to her pain by intruding on her secrets, or listening to what I have no right to hear. Tell her what you please. Say I asked no questions, and desired to know nothing more than you chose to tell me. Only, whatever you say, do not let her think her warning was a needless one, and that she has gone through all this misery

for nothing. Say everything in the way of thanks, and above all assure her I shall keep myself on my guard."

"You are noble and considerate, as you always were, Hugh," said Maude, reaching out her hand to him. "At least, Mr. Hemprigge has not spoiled you."

"Noble, do you say, and living in friendly intercourse with him, and in this business he helped me to! As for him, he shall repent this the longest day ——"

"Stay, Hugh. I don't say it for your own sake, but for Lucy's—you must not make a quarrel of this. He is quick to suspect and put things together. We know his malice, and you both may have cause to dread his tongue. Reptiles are hard to crush; and he might do some one a mischief that nothing could repair."

That argument seemed to strike Hugh, and stagger him.

"Then," she went on jesuitically, "remember, although he did lose his temper, and spoke as only a coarse-minded man could speak, it was under excessively mortifying circumstances; and if he was atrociously impertinent, he apologized promptly and amply. So far as that goes, Lucy ought to be silent, and you could only do her an injury by putting yourself forward as her champion. If you have anything to resent, it is his expression of animosity towards yourself."

"As for that, he may do his worst. I defy him to hurt me, and were ours ordinary business relations, I should be content to go on meeting him on the distant footing I have banished him to, and continue to tolerate him as I have done. But we were friends in a fashion once: I blush to remember it. I owe him obligations, too, although he helped me for his own ends, and hoped to use me as a cat's-paw. The business world has learned to identify us in a manner, and I often loathe my very prosperity, Maude, when I recollect it is partly of his creation. He knows well he can always sting me by reminding me of it. He has fixed me in golden fetters, and they jingle and gall me at each step I take. To think I am trifling knowingly all this time with my honour for that accursed money of Miss Childersleigh!"

The spirit of unworldliness embodied in Lucy had never rested on him so strongly, and it nerved him for the moment with the impetuous force of a Berserker. The fit was on him, and he was almost resolved to break out of Hemprigge's golden bands, to burst all the bonds old hopes and old habits had shackled him in. Had it been Lucy he had been talking with, the inspiration of her presence might have wrought him to wisdom or to madness, and the deed would have been done. Maude, with all her worldliness, had never admired him so much. Perhaps for the time being, she forgot her adventure in the fogs of Killoden, and the dreams had come of it, and remembered and regretted a morning-scene in the garden-walk at "The Cedars." But she had been brought up her father's daughter, and she felt to Lucy differently from Hugh. When it was a question of friendship, she was too conscientiously

practical to encourage any one in whose welfare she interested herself in the indulgence of sentiments, however admirable, at a price so heavy.

"Do nothing hastily, Hugh. By waiting a month or two you may spare yourself the regrets of a lifetime. The time of your probation is nearly at an end, and do not, from an overstrained sense of honour, throw lightly away all you have toiled and schemed for. No one but yourself, believe me, sees Mr. Hemprigge's fetters on your limbs. If you ever did owe him anything, he has wiped the debt out twenty times over. Remember, too, if you renounce the prize when your hand is stretched out to grasp it, you serve his antipathies and wishes beyond his hopes. No; if you mean to punish him, and I must say he richly deserves it, persevere until September, and then you are absolutely your own master to act as you please."

And the spirit of worldly wisdom having answered the promptings of the angel of unworldliness, and left her last shaft quivering in the very clout of the target, cut short the conversation with a sense of reproachful self-humiliation.

Maude was quite right in trusting much to her parting shot. Nothing short of such an argument would have held Hugh back from an open quarrel with Hemprigge, whatever the consequences to himself or his Company. He brooded over the scene between him and Lucy. His intelligence worked up Maude's hints into a tolerably faithful representation of all that had passed. As was natural, however, the more he brooded, the blacker grew the colours Hemprigge figured in, and the grosser the brutality of his language. Perhaps it might have been better for him had his delicacy been smaller, or had he suffered Maude to be more outspoken. For, in his knowledge of the world and its inmates, he would have seen that Hemprigge was not altogether the monster his heated imagination and temper pictured him, but simply what he had always suspected and long known him for—an unscrupulous, vulgar-minded, evil-tempered man, spoiled by prosperity and irritated by jealousy. But if his fancy sketches of Hemprigge, his rehearsals of his demeanour and language, roused his passions, the pathetic portraits he drew himself of Lucy unspeakably touched his heart. When his own griefs or loves inspire him, a man's art and eloquence are wonderfully self-moving and self-seductive. There, at least, there was no danger of deceiving himself; he had the materials all ready to his hand. Her shy suffering face haunted him as he had seen it last, and he could not forget it was he who had been the cause of her sorrows. He thought of her as an Andromeda chained to the rock in helpless grace and beauty; of Hemprigge as the monster who, disappointed of her and her charms, delighted himself with her tears and her terrors. In her kindness for himself—he did not call it love—she had provoked their common enemy, and with all the strength, if he cared to put it forth, he had neither the chivalry nor the courage to come to the rescue. Yet was not Maude right, and what could he do?

If he attempted to act the Perseus, his thrusts would recoil on himself, and he should only play the enemy's game. The many who envied him his great fortune guessed little of his frame of mind. Amid all his real prosperity, he told himself he was still garnering the old crops of wild oats, paying the penalties of early indiscretions, and suffering for the questionable companionship in which he had sought to extricate himself from them. He reproached himself with having wilfully closed his eyes to his ally's character, in the confidence that if he proved a rogue he could nevertheless use him with clean hands. It is not so easy, as he reflected bitterly, to work with pitch, and yet keep yourself from defilement. The man had been his tool, indeed; but even useful tools may hurt the hands that wield them. He might have been happier, he thought, had he carried the wreck of his fortunes to Nevada as he proposed, although they had been sunk there in bottomless mines or gone to enrich western swindlers. With it all he toiled harder than ever in his business, but for distraction, not from pleasure. Never before had he longed so wearily for the goal towards which he had been struggling, not because he looked to find wealth at it but liberty, and, if the truth must be told, vengeance. He who had valued money as much as most, had come to acknowledge it might be dearly come by; that in money-getting, as in fox-hunting, the pleasure or pain is in the chase, and the object worthless. Could Hemprigge have guessed the secrets of that outwardly impassive nature, he might have had the doubtful comfort of assuring himself that his malignity had made the man he detested marvellously indifferent to the winning of the great prize he had first taught him to hope for, and that, even were it won, the winning it from first to last would be mainly due to him.

While Hugh was holding his hand for fear of his blow recoiling on himself to the pleasure of his enemy, Hemprigge's ill-advised stroke at Lucy had lighted on the individual that gentleman loved so very dearly. Hugh had immense self-control, or he could not have gone on meeting the Manager as they did meet. But he called his self-control by a harsher, perhaps a juster name; and when the two had had that last interview we recorded, much more than Hemprigge's sneers, it was the feeling he was lowering himself to an equality with the man he so cordially despised, that made him hold the tone he did, and issue those embarrassing and insulting instructions. Yet really he had begun the battle, when he thought he had only shown his readiness for it, and taken the first active steps in an interchange of injuries.

Meanwhile gratitude had, at least, kept pace with resentment, and sent him the day after the dinner on an errand of inquiry to "The Cedars." The last week or two had woven him into Lucy's existence, and made him the object of her thoughts and dreams and nightmares, and it was natural he should still keep his place in these, equally natural, consequently, that she should have foreseen this attention. Certain it is, that although not much given to nursing herself, and greatly relieved in mind and restored in body, she could not be prevailed on to

leave her apartment until the visit had been announced and the visitor was gone; that Maude, although she thought her friend quite equal to the exertion of coming downstairs, had only smiled when she refused, and not attempted to urge the point. But this painful proof that her health had been rudely shaken brought Mr. Childersleigh there again the following day, and at an hour, too, when he had never before been known to quit his business avocations for the calls of society; Maude, glancing at her companion, when the door of the morning-room was thrown open and Mr. Childersleigh was announced, saw her start and crimson to the temples. But Mr. Childersleigh's eyes carefully avoided the invalid's face, and after the briefest and most matter-of-course inquiries, he directed his looks and conversation exclusively to Maude, and cut his stay very short indeed. Uncivil as it seemed, Lucy appeared to understand it, and actually felt more warmly to him for his neglect than she had done before for actual benefits. Had she resented it, perhaps the apologetic pressure on her hand, when he took his leave, would have made his peace. As for Maude, she had been studying lately under a tutor of her own, but even without the deepening flush on Lucy's face, she would have been just as certain of the pressure as if she had felt it. She looked on in demure silence, and *che sarà, sarà*, was her philosophical reflection. Strong and sensible as her character was, it had its weaknesses; and partial friendship and sympathetic feelings were beginning to demoralize her.

London: Printed by Smith, Elder, and Co., Old Bailey, E.C.